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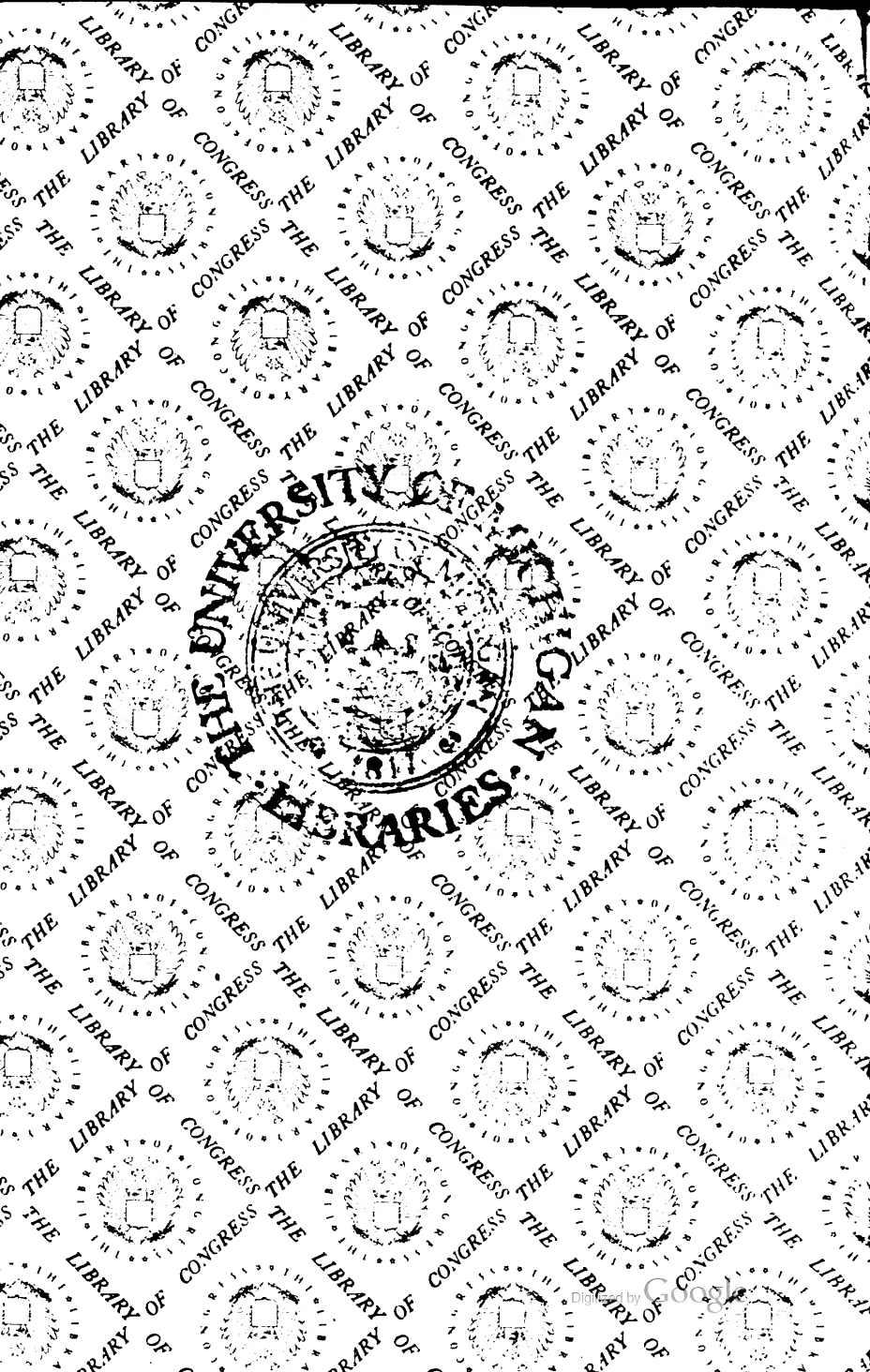
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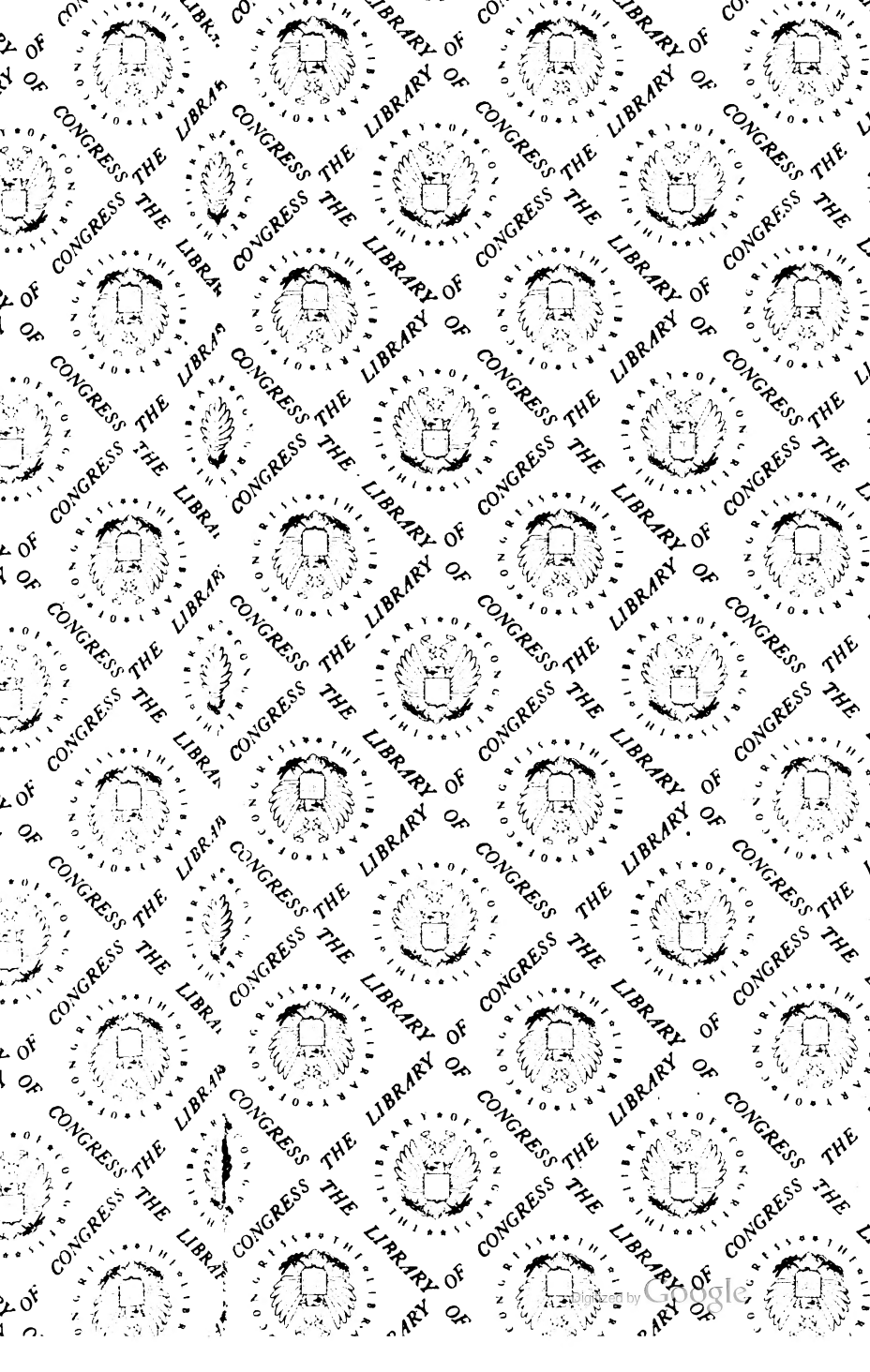
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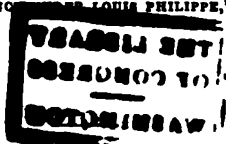


HISTORY
OF THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION.

HISTORY
OF THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION

OF
1789:

BY
LOUIS BLANC,
MEMBER OF THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE.
AUTHOR OF "FRANCISQUE LOUIS PHILIPPE," ETC. ETC.



TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

VOL. I.

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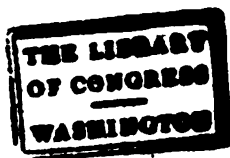
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7

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THIS work, which is in course of publication in Paris, is now for the first time offered to the public in the English language. It will be completed in ten original volumes, the first two of which are embraced in this.

Its author has recently acquired for himself a world-wide reputation as a leading and active member of the Provisional Government of France. He had been previously known in the literary world by his "France under Louis Philippe," which had procured for him the reputation of an able and brilliant writer, an original thinker, and a powerful delineator. These traits will be found conspicuous in the present volume, which contains the causes that, in his opinion, led from afar to the great French Revolution of 1789, and the opening scenes of that mighty drama.

It has been the object of the translator to present the author's ideas, and more especially in the theoretical and philosophical parts of the work, in, as nearly as possible, his own language. Should there therefore be found passages to which criticism may except as being too literal, this must be his apology therefor.

Philadelphia, 1848.

THE PREFACE.

HISTORY commences and finishes no where. The facts of which the path of the world is formed, present so much confusion and have such obscure affinities to each other, that there is no event whose first cause nor highest supposition can be marked with certainty. The beginning and the end are in God, that is in the unknown. How then can we fix the true point of departure of that French Revolution, which, sprung from the most remote upheavings of the mind, appears to contain everything in its depths? Thus I have not designed to embrace completely what such a subject recalls or allows. Even such as my insufficiency conceives and measures it, it appears to me, immense. And what a formidable, what a bloody history!—But instead of striking us with consternation, let these painful remembrances reassure us. If it is reserved for us to accomplish only the intellectual part of the work, it is because the men of the Revolution took the melancholy part upon themselves. It is they who have rendered easy for us that meekness of manners, in the name of which we have suffered their statues to be veiled, cowardly and ungrateful hearts that we have, by the obstacles which they have met in our place and surmounted on our account, by the combats from which they have freed us, by perishing in them. Their violences have thus bequeathed quiet destinies to us. They have exhausted alarm, exhausted the penalty of death; and terror has become again impossible, from its very excess.

At its commencement, the Revolution had nothing alarming about it. There were at first but transports of joy covering the agitations of the public place and saluting the new laws. But what is that assembly which is formed in the storm? The men who compose it represent all the forces and all the interests of humanity, its resentments, its griefs, its hopes. What do they wish? to avenge the world and to remodel it. Yet what obstacles and what dangers. From their very first steps, they

are in the thickest of treasons and plots. From the depth of her moved plains, from the depth of her roused cities, France sends them, mingled with hymns of enthusiasm, warnings and clamors of civil war. Europe, which they alarm, is but a great league formed against them, and which is about to envelop them in its movement. But instead of shrinking from the storms, they provoke them, they wish them to be mortal. Masters of the life of a king whom they could degrade by pardoning him, they would prefer his disgrace to his death; but it becomes impossible for them to draw back; there await them prodigious dangers, enemies become implacable and the certainty of being exterminated if they do not exterminate. It is therefore, that they strike their captive king, disdaining him whilst they strike. Then breaks forth their powerful delirium. By the light of burning chateaux, by the noise of the tocsin from the city halls, and of the drum which beats revolt, by the noise of the hostile cannon which has crossed the frontier and is approaching, whilst a furious multitude surrounds the assembly, brandishing pikes and howling at the gates, they, calm and violent, prepare themselves to crush every thing; and behold them deliberating amidst the bellows of the people. Their secret for saving France is to believe it sublime and to say so. The old will go to the public places to encourage the combatants; women and children will assist the wounded; the labor of the nation will be to forge swords, cast cannon, sharpen the iron of the lances. The territory is a camp, the country a soldier; and for enemies within there are judges with hearts of brass, and the sword of the executioner, unceasingly raised.

Thus speak these terrible men; and ordering victory by a decree they push a million of republicans to the frontier. The enemy soon hurled beyond our mountains and our rivers, Europe is in its turn invaded, covered with confusion, inundated with blood and marked with the impress of new maxims. The Senate of the Revolution has dared and accomplished that which was above the genius of Roman Senators. Whilst by bold laws and august wisdom, it labors to give fraternal destinies to people, it directs from afar its fourteen armies, it restrains, it governs them by civil commissioners, the watchmen of ambition; and the fiercest of the generals, if he becomes suspected, receives in his camp and in the midst of his soldiers, an order, always obeyed, to appear before an inflexible tribunal, to ask pardon from the people and to die.

Within, however, France is filled with funerals. Tables of proscription have been drawn up, more vaguely homicidal than those of Sylla. Many perish to-day; no one knows if he will be alive to-morrow; but in those

days so heroical, that heroism is no longer remarked, human nature having become unmeasurably dignified, death has lost all power to alarm. The prisons full of suspected persons, the guillotines on which women appear, the streets, the tribune, bring to light virtues and crimes of which antiquity was ignorant. Among those condemned, who from their funeral cars utter eloquent imprecations, I perceive some, who with head erect and their looks turned to heaven, adore the liberty which slays them.

And yet, admirable thing, it is thought, which hovers over this empire of disorder. 'Two men whose hearts were united by the fanaticism of intelligence; a sombre logician and a philosopher regulated in his life, his hatred and his designs, these ruled; these were the two who surrendered to the fury of the people their very tribunes and courtiers. At Rome the triumvirs gorged themselves with spoils; here the proscribers remained poor, and the most powerful of them lived beneath the roof of an artizan, whose son he hoped to become. Do not tell them they will have their turn; they know it; do not threaten them with the anathema of future ages; by a devotion unexampled and unequalled, they have placed in the number of their sacrifices their names devoted, if necessary, to eternal infamy. Invincible to fear, superior to remorse, what do they invoke to absolve themselves? Their faith, their profound policy, and that law of nature which "wills man to weep at his birth." But on the point of appeasing the Revolution to guide it, they fall, conquered, bloody and insulted, they fall and they carry with them this glory, this grief, that their death delays the enfranchisement of the earth.

What a sight! what instruction! yes, at the remembrance of those lively struggles of thought, which had the happiness of men for their final object, the scaffold for an instrument, the public places for a theatre, and the alarmed world as witnesses; at the moment of awakening from their common sleep to replace them face to face on the edge of that gulf which will draw them all in, master and subjects, nobles, priests, plebeians, sacrificers and victims; at the moment of invoking you, in order to judge you, dear and condemned shades, tragic phantoms, heroes of an incomparable epoch, I have difficulty, I avow, in commanding my emotion, and I feel my heart full of respect and alarm.

We must first seek the causes, by drawing them from as remote a distance as it is possible to follow the chain. It would be despising the Revolution and its sublime compass to confound its explosion and its date. Those events, whose recollection still palpitates, could not have been born of some vulgar accidents, some modern embarrassments. They

sum up several ages of sufferings, disasters, generous efforts, valiant anger. All nations have contributed to produce them; all have their future engaged in them. It is justly the glory of the great people of France, of having done the work of the human race at the price of its blood shed in floods; of having scandalized Europe to save it; of having defended to the last, to death, the cause of all people against all people: magnanimous revolt, truly single, in which, through ages and by an inevitable course, the revolts of the past have met and lost themselves, as rivers in the sea.

ORIGIN

AND

CAUSES OF THE REVOLUTION.

DESIGN AND PLAN.

THREE great principles divide the world and history among themselves:
—AUTHORITY—INDIVIDUALISM—FRATERNITY.

To recognize them, to follow them through so many agitations and misfortunes as their meeting produced, we must mark well their character, must give an impress of it.

The dryness of some necessary definitions will be pardoned us here; the tragedies will come but too soon and be but too impressive.

The principle of authority is that which causes the life of nations to repose on beliefs blindly accepted, on superstitious respect for tradition, upon inequality, and which uses constraint as its means of government.

The principle of individualism is that, which taking man out of society, renders him the sole judge of that which surrounds him and of himself, gives him an exalted sentiment of his rights, without pointing out to him his duties, abandons him to his own strength, and for government, proclaims the let-alone system.

The principle of fraternity is that, which regarding the members of the great family as homogeneous, tends one day to organize societies, the work of man, upon the model of the human body, the work of God, and founds the power of governing upon persuasion, upon the voluntary assent of hearts.

AUTHORITY has been used by catholicism with a splendor which astonishes; it prevailed until the time of Luther.

INDIVIDUALISM, inaugurated by Luther, has developed itself with an irresistible force, and freed from the religious element, it triumphed in France through the publicists of the constituent assembly. It rules the present; it is the soul of things.

FRATERNITY, announced by the thinkers of the mountain, disappeared then in a tempest, and only re-appears now in the remote ideal; but all great hearts call for it, and it already occupies and illumines the highest sphere of intellects.

Of these three principles, the first engenders oppression by stifling personality; the second leads to oppression through anarchy; the third alone, by means of harmony, gives birth to liberty.

Liberty! said Luther; liberty! repeated in chorus the philosophers of the eighteenth century; and it is this word, liberty, which in our days is written on the banners of civilization. It has been misunderstood and falsified, and since Luther, this misunderstanding, this falsehood have filled history; it was individualism which happened, not liberty.

Certainly when we consider it in its historical frame, when we compare it with what preceded it, instead of comparing it with what ought to follow it, individualism has the importance of having made vast progress. To furnish air and expansion to human thought so long restrained; to intoxicate it with pride and audacity; to submit to the control of every mind the heaped up traditions, ages, their labors, their beliefs; to place man in an isolation full of disquietude, full of dangers, but sometimes also full of majesty, and to permit him to resolve individually, in the midst of an immense strife, in the voice of an universal debate, the problem of his happiness and his destiny . . . this is a grand work, and it is the work of individualism. We must then speak of it with respect, and as a necessary transition. But this done, we shall be permitted to elevate our sympathies and our hopes into higher regions. Humanity had need by turns of the Pope and of Luther; but the principle of authority has run its race, the principle of individualism will finish its own, and the future belongs evidently neither to the Pope nor to Luther.

We can now comprehend how, in what we are accustomed to call the French revolution, there were in reality two perfectly distinct revolutions, though both were directed against the old principle of authority.

The one operated for the advantage of individualism; it bears date 1789.

The other was but tumultuously essayed in the name of fraternity; it fell on the ninth Thermidor.

If the revolution of 1789, was the only one which took root, it was because it did not seize on society suddenly; it was because it used for its interests a class which had become dominant; the burgher; it was in fine because it came with a complete doctrine, under the triple aspect of philosophy, politics and industry.

This preliminary work will then naturally divide itself into three books.

The first shows in consequence of what surprising combats, passionate outbreaks, sacrifices and violences, the principle of individualism introduced itself into the world, striking on the one hand authority in the church, and on the other fraternity among the Vaudois, the Hussites, the Anabaptists, the Moravian brethren, and all thinkers armed for the cause of the gospel.

The second recalls the victories successively gained in France by that middling class, whose empire individualism founded and affords an itineary of French burgherism across history.

In the third we endeavor to show how, in the eighteenth century and in spite of the efforts of Jean Jacques Rousseau, of Mably, of Necker himself, individualism became the principle of the burghers and triumphed; in philosophy, through the school of Voltaire; in politics, through that of Montesquieu; in industry, through that of Turgot.

Thus, protestantism, burgherism, the eighteenth century, such are the three grand divisions of the preliminary work. This frame once filled, we shall have assisted at the dramatic and dolorous birth of the revolution; it will only then be left for us to relate its life.

BOOK FIRST.

PROTESTANTISM.

CHAPTER I.

INDIVIDUALISM IS INAUGURATED IN THE CHRISTIAN WORLD.

JOHN HUSS.

Sight afforded to Europe by the Council of Constance; authority on one side, fraternity on the other.—Revolutionary sense of heresies.—The equality of the laity and the priesthood demanded above all else—Why?—Punishment of John Huss; greatness of his cause.—In the name of fraternity, the Hussites of Bohemia, rise, combat and fall as the Jacobins of France afterwards did.—The times of fraternity not yet come; the scene appertains to individualism.

LET us transport ourselves in thought in 1414, to Constance, in the circle of Swabia. But lately a desert, the city was suddenly filled with noise, with a crowd, with splendor. The eyes of all Europe were on this small corner of Germany. There was about to take place an imposing and terrible drama, and one whose reach the actors did not suspect. There were opposed in mortal combat two principles, between which, even now the world has to decide.

The principle of authority had all the powers of the Earth at its command; an Emperor, a Pope, four Patriarchs, twenty-two Cardinals, an hundred and fifty Bishops, eight hundred Priests, two hundred and seventy-two Doctors, and a tumultuous assemblage of Princes, Electors, Barons, Marqueses, a populace used to obey custom, thousands of obedient and fierce soldiers.

*The principle of fraternity was personified in a poor Curate, named John Huss, whom they had thrown into prison and were about to judge.

The preparation displayed was solemn. The pomps of the Roman Catholic Church were exhibited to the charmed people. Never had more incense fumed; never had voices more respected raised to Heaven the grave chant of *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*, and the cross surmounted every thing. For if the principle of fraternity, which Christ taught, had been despised or betrayed, it had at least survived in its symbol. Imperishable and adored, the sign had saved from forgetfulness the thing signified;

and still upright, the cross had, for fourteen centuries, convicted of inconsistency and cowardice the oppressors who bent before it.

But was it true that the Church, that Kings, that the masters of the Earth had abandoned the doctrines of him whose image fastened to a gibbet, they saluted in common? How could this holy doctrine be understood, so as to apply it to the enfranchisement of the human race? The council and John Huss represented in this matter, not only two contrary opinions, but two opposite traditions.

The primitive equality of the Christians broken; the Church adopting the Pagan hierarchy; the right of choosing their pastors taken from the people; bishops in palaces; a pope, and that pope on a throne like Cæsar; pontiffs proclaiming themselves infallible and showing themselves soiled; the priesthood, isolated by celibacy from the rest of mankind and having no longer but an immense caste for a family, but Rome for a country; a skilful, but impure mixture of Christian spiritualism, monkish asceticism and pagan idolatry to speak to the heart of man, his imagination, his senses and to rule him entirely; now courtizans couched upon the cushions of the Vatican, now Solitaries canonized for having beaten themselves with rods in the depths of the cloister; the strength of Catholicism, its genius, its prodigious conquests; the moral unity of the world prepared, but also the monstrous disorders of Rome, its despotism upheld by inquisitors and executioners; its usurpations, its artifices, its opulence condemned by a recollection of the poverty of Christ; its struggles with temporal power to assimilate itself to it, not to render it better; then its long complicity with kings; the earth finally become Christian, and remaining nevertheless covered with slaves, the poor and the oppressed:—See how history goes on, reviving and resuming in it that celebrated council of Constance, in which by the side of Balthazar Cossa, one of the then three scandalous popes, sat the Emperor Sigismund, his soul a prey to the cares of pride and his hands tinged with blood.

John Huss was there, on the other hand, to recall, that the doctrine of fraternity had an indestructible essence; that altered by the church, it had been, in religious matters, preserved by heresy; that even in the midst of the thickest darkness, it had always been found in some part of Europe burning in a bye place, like a lamp placed in reserve and immortal; that in order to annihilate it, councils had in vain been convened, armies assembled, savage crusades preached, fire and sword employed. John Huss was the continuer of all those who, under a theological form, had protested against the abuse of the principle of authority, and had appealed from the church to the gospel, from the Pope to Jesus, from the tyranny of man to the guardianship of God. John Huss continued, Peter Brueys given to the flames; the Albigenes massacred; the Vaudois, whom a war of extermination awaited; the Lyonese Valdo,*

* Valdo was not as is commonly believed the founder of the sect of the Vaudois. That goes back further than the twelfth century. See on this subject Beausobre, *Hist. du Manichéisme*, Preface, t. 1, p. 4.

According to the testimony of Claude Seyssel, the Vaudois go back to the days of the apostles. *Histoire des Albigeois et des Vaudois*, par le R. P. Benoist, t. 2, p. 238, Ed. 1691.

who towards the middle of the twelfth century* sold his goods, distributed the price of them to the poor, and renewed the life of the apostles; the English Wickliffe, whose dead body had been disinterred to be burned, and his ashes to be cast into the river Lutterworth; John Huss, in a word, continued those heretics, whom the Dominican monk Reinher, their enemy, has painted in these terms, "They are quiet and modest in all things. They avoid luxury and vanity in their dress. They do not carry on any trade, on account of the frauds and falsehoods which are committed in it. They commune willingly. They speak little and humbly. They have apparently good morals. They are usually pale."†

And we must not be astonished, if until this time the revolts of conscience and the cry of the people, if the movements of the human mind, if the heavings of the earth in labor, had been but theological revolutions. Rome had become so high, since the time of Gregory the Seventh, that it was seen from every where. It covered with its shadow thrones themselves. The recollection of Henry the Fourth of Germany was recalled, despoiled of his kingly garments, covered with hair cloth and a suppliant with tears in his eyes, at the knees of an irritated monk. "The pope alone is to be named in this world,"‡ had said Hildebrand, and he made astonished nations believe it. Besides, was not the church in the entire possession of man? She received him on his entrance into life; she presided over the formation of families; she decided questions of morals; she received the last thought of the dying; she conducted the festival of the dead; she stood on the threshold of the two eternities, which she had made a subject of hope or fear to the faithful. She was then alone, and appeared to be responsible for the state of the world.

It was on this account that usurpation, then condemned by the name of heresy what, in our days, it has condemned by the name of revolt.

In a famous book,§ Bossuet defies heresy to produce a compilation of its doctrines, and to prove its tradition. But without recurring to the refutations of Basnage, so learned and so moderate, and confining ourselves to the avowals of Bossuet himself, did not those sects spring from the great family of Christ, who all agreed in saying, "No more oaths, it is an invention of tyranny; no more rich and proud pastors, Jesus lived poor; let him be deprived of the functions of a priest who is not virtuous; let every layman, who shall lead a holy life, have the right to administer the communion, and sow the divine seed by his path?" Such is the doctrine found in the Confessions of the Albigenses at the council of Lombez,|| in the wholly evangelical life of the Vaudois,¶ in the writings of Wickliffe, in the preachings of John Huss; an exalted but profound and continuous doctrine, whose meaning is revealed to us by the history of the Catholic establishment.

Scarcely constituted, Catholicism founds its empire upon a distinction between the Spirit and the flesh. Immediately two societies are formed;

* On the identity of the two sects, Albigenses and Vaudois, see Basnage, *Hist. de l'Eglise*, t. 2. p. 1417.

† *Lenfant, Hist. du Concile de Constance*, p. 268.

‡ "Quod unicum est nomen in mundo." *Dictatus Gregorii*, Papa 7.

§ *Hist. des Variations*, liv. xi. *Œuv. Compl. Edit. Didot*.

|| *Ibid.* t. 6, p. 32.

¶ *Ibid.* t. 6. p. 42.

the first spiritual, affecting celibacy, representing the ideas of caste, calling itself the depositary of the powers of heaven; the second material and civil, perpetuating itself by marriage, representing the idea of the family, and bound down by preoccupation with the affairs of earth. Lo the church on one side, the world on the other.

Thus, do you not expect that the church prescribes, encourages without itself what, in its own bosom it practises and sanctifies? No, the separation will be complete, absolute. In the church will prevail the right of intelligence, and it will abandon the world to the right of force, of chance; popes will be elective, kings hereditary.

And in separating itself from the world, the church has not agreed to live with it on terms of equality. It has only detached itself from it, to rule and regulate it. Glory to the Spirit, anathema to the flesh. Such is the cry which kings utter at the feet of popes, and consecrate the sway of the religious society over the civil.

The meaning of heresies is now explained, their end defined. The great inequality to be destroyed was that which cut humanity in two, and had the whole universe for its theatre. Before uniting the different conditions, they must unite heaven and earth. They must elevate the subject to the level of the king, the slave to the level of the master, the poor man to the level of the rich. And they had to make for the benefit of equality, another and more pressing effort; it was to elevate the layman to the level of the priest.

The Revolution, which, prepared by philosophers, continued by politicians, will not accomplish itself but by socialism, ought then naturally to commence by theology.

It was, as is seen, a lofty question, which was to be debated between the council and John Huss. But it happened that on the eve of condemning, in an humble priest, the budding genius of modern revolutions, the church contributed from afar to unchain it, by proclaiming the superiority of councils over popes. For it thus struck at the monarchical idea; it opened a path for the stormy government of assemblies.

A great example was immediately made. John the twenty-second, accused of rapine, incest and poisoning, was hurled from the pontifical throne before the eyes of all Europe, on these words of the Evangelist read before the assembly: *Now is he the judge of the world; now is the prince of this world about to be cast out.*

For ever odious inconsistency! The council struck a decisive blow at the great fiction of the infallibility of the popes; it exclaimed, so as to be heard through all Christendom, that a pope covered with crimes could cease to be pope; and yet this same council was about to condemn John Huss for having said: "If he who is called the Vicar of Jesus Christ imitates the life of Jesus Christ, he is his Vicar; but if he pursues an opposite course, he is the messenger of anti-Christ."

Let us stop here for a moment. Now, after so many years employed in showing the unveiled truth to men, in destroying every prestige, in effacing every symbol, now, we cannot avoid feeling a mournful compassion, when we reflect by what questions the middle ages were moved and rent. What, for the sole purpose of restoring to the faithful the

right of communing in both kinds, kingdoms overturned; Germany on fire; armies of a hundred thousand men pushed to a war of extermination; numerous people flying from their homes with a gospel and a sword, changing their manners, and living solely beneath the open heavens; a frightful series of massacres, fabulous combats, disorders; and to consecrate the memory of so many furies, countries, as after the disasters of Varus, covered with blanched bones? Such was to be, however, in its principle and its effects, the war of which the proceedings against John Huss contained the bloody germ.

Do not be surprised at it. In the gifts of true christianity, to commune, the word indicates it—was to perform an act of equality. By communion, christians united themselves before God; they recognized themselves as brethren. That the symbol should respond to the idea, it was necessary, that the act should be accomplished by all in the same way, by all without exception. In reserving to themselves the exclusive privilege of communing under both kinds, the priests separated themselves from the rest of the faithful; they called God himself to witness the legitimacy of Castes; they broke the social equality in its most elevated form, the religious form. Thus we shall find at the close of the eighteenth century, this liberating and inevitable question, occupying minds, ruling souls, and it will not have changed its essence. Only its theological form will have given place to its political form, and what we shall see spring from it, will be, the second act of the French Revolution.

John Huss having come to Constance on the faith of a safe conduct given him by the Emperor Sigismund, had seen it shamefully violated, and the loss of his liberty announced to him but too well the secret determination of the council; the hour was then approaching in which he must die. But John Huss saw through the shadows of the future events that which maintained his soul above the dread of death. "The goose,"* said he, in allusion to his name, "is a modest bird which does not fly very high. It will give birth to others who will raise themselves by quick jerks of the wings above the snares of the enemies."

On the appointed day, John Huss appeared before the council. The face of the prisoner was mild, tranquil and bold. He was reproached for having pushed on in Bohemia scenes of violence, or at least for having authorized them; but the greatness of the danger had, by fortifying his conviction and redoubling the energy of his will, soothed and calmed his heart. An author, an eye witness, gives the following account of the first audience: "Scarcely had they read an article against him, as he thought to open his mouth to reply, this whole troop so commenced crying out against him, that he could not say a single word; so great was the confusion and impetuous the trouble, that it might well be called a noise of savage beasts and not of men."†

On the 7th of June, the day appointed for the second hearing, there was an eclipse of the sun, and Constance remained in darkness for some hours. In this second audience, he was accused of having adhered to

* Huss signifies goose.

† Hist. des Martyrs, p. 56. Edit. in folio, Geneva, 1619.

the forty-five propositions of Wickliffe, which the council had condemned in its eighth session, and of which the principal are the following.*

"Christ is not himself and of his own real person in the sacrament—it is contrary to scripture for ecclesiastics to hold goods as property—no more mendicant monks—the Roman church is the synagogue of Satan, and the pope is not the next and immediate vicar of Jesus Christ—it is folly to believe in indulgences—the people can, at their pleasure, correct their masters when they fall into any error."

Thus had Wickliffe attacked the privileges and practices they used to sustain themselves, denounced the reign of the idle, invoked the authority of scripture against the monopoly of wealth, and proclaimed the sovereignty of the people.

This doctrine, except in the article about the eucharist, was at the bottom that of Huss. He therefore refused courageously to subscribe to the condemnation of Wickliffe, and remained firm in his faith to the end.

There exists a concealed but necessary bond between all kinds of oppression and all kinds of revolt; this appears very clearly in the case of Huss. Being interrogated on the article, "If a pope, a bishop, or a prelate is in mortal sin, he is neither pope, bishop, nor prelate," he affirmed resolutely the truth of the principle, and extending it to kings, recalled the speech of Samuel to Saul, "Because you have rejected my word, I will also reject you, and you shall be no longer king." At this moment, relates the historian of the Council of Constance,† the Emperor Sigismund was conversing at a window with the Elector Palatine and the burgrave of Nuremburg. The Cardinal of Cambray called to him, and having summoned Huss to repeat what he had said, in the presence of Sigismund, "Not content," he exclaimed in a fury, "with degrading priests, would you degrade kings?" A cruel and cowardly reproach under the circumstances, but of a profound meaning, more profound than the Cardinal of Cambray himself imagined.

John Huss came to do his duty, it only remained for him to die. At the approach of this difficult and last proof, he collected his thoughts and did not appear to be exempt from anguish. The prison had besides weighed heavily upon him; he was sick, he vomited blood. He remained nevertheless immovable. They pressed him uselessly to retract, he replied like those who know that their life appertains to their cause.

He was condemned. Then turning towards the Emperor Sigismund, he reminded him of the safe conduct, and as he reminded the traitorous prince of his pledge, the latter could not meet his glance and a sudden blush covered his face.

John Huss had appealed to Christ, and the fathers of the council had only laughed. They placed on his head in derision a mitre of a cubit's height, on which was written the word HERESARCH. "I congratulate myself," he said, "on wearing this crown of opprobrium, in memory of Jesus, who wore a crown of thorns." They inflicted on him several

* Von der Hardt, cited by Lenfant, p. 207.

† Lenfant, p. 330.

other humiliations.* He was then handed over to the secular arm and led to death. By an execrable refinement of barbarity, the fathers of the council had ordered, that on his way to punishment they should burn his books,† that before handing over his body to the executioners, he might witness the profanation of his thoughts. Having arrived at the scaffold, falling on his knees he exclaimed, "My God, into thy hands do I commit my soul." Among the multitude were many who full of admiration and pity murmured, "What is the crime of this man?" He was fastened to a stake, with his face turned towards the rising sun, but some remarking that he was unworthy to look towards the east, because he was a heretic, he was turned towards the west. The funeral pile was then kindled, and the last aspirations of the martyr exhaled in hymns in the midst of the flames. His ashes were cast into the Rhine. But he left avengers, and his touching prediction was to be accomplished. "It will give birth to other birds which will rise with quick jerks of the wings above the snares of enemies."

The cause which John Huss represented, and for which also Jerome of Prague, his disciple, died, had so much grandeur, that all Bohemia was struck with it. And whilst, made pope by the grace of the council, Otho Colonna appeared in the streets of Constance, mounted upon a white horse, whose reins the Emperor and the Elector Palatine held; whilst, dragged in triumph by the sovereign pontiff, Sigismund appeared to recognize the authority of the priesthood over the laity, the equality of priest and layman was proclaimed by Bohemia rising in arms to the cry of **THE CUP TO THE PEOPLE**. Thirty thousand warriors then assembled at the call of Ziska, who, making Mount Tabor their camp and their city, realized the life of the family on the field of battle; then commenced a struggle in which a handful of men, by blow on blow, annihilated the armies Germany sent against them.

What characterized this war of the Hussites, was a truly unheard-of mixture of ideal aspirations and of cruelty. Poetic transports succeeded devastations of convents and odious massacres. Preceded by a wooden chalice, a symbol of the doctrine which was to render them invincible, fierce warriors marched by the side of priests who delighted in the simplicity of the apostles, and who, like St. John, baptized only in the pure water of streams.‡ After expeditions which show monks chained to ice, or Carthusians led through cities with their foreheads encircled with a crown of thorns; after returning from combats which recall those of Homer, the Taborites assembled on the mountain of encampment, to seat themselves at fraternal banquets,§ to listen to the voice of the priest, and to essay that life full of peace, poetry and love, which hope pointed out to them in the horizon.

The war lasted for sixteen years, and Ziska displayed in it a barbarous exaltation, mixed with a rare profundity of genius. He was one-eyed:

* *Hist. des Martyrs*, p. 56. Theobaldus on his side thus relates this terrible scene: "Tandem omnibus vestibus sacerdotalibus exuto capitis quoque rasuram illi turpificare velle, etc." *Bellum Hussiticum*, p. 50.

† Abbe Fleury. *Hist. Ecclesiast.* t. vi. liv. ci.—Lenfant, p. 164.

‡ *Æneæ Sylvi de Bohem. his. cap 35*, p. 30.

§ Theobaldus, *Bellum Hussiticum*, p. 71, Rub. 20. Francofurti, 1721.

struck with an arrow,* he lost his remaining eye, and became only more terrible. The eternal night on which he entered only exalted the powers of his heart, and he went on, pursuing carnage in the darkness. Having died, Procopius inherited his hatreds and his victories.†

But among the Bohemians, there were by the side of those who said, "to be free, let us all be brethren," those who confined themselves to saying, "let us be free." By the side of the Taborites were Calixtins, the Thermidorians of that day, future traitors, who ruled Prague. These entered into a negotiation with the council of Basle, and on the 6th of May, 1434, they murdered, for the advantage of the common enemy, their allies, their saviours, having treacherously surprised them. What murder commenced, a battle finished, and there were no more Taborites.

The doctrine did not, however, perish with them. The violent disciples had disappeared, the peaceful remained; the Bohemian brethren remained who were to be to the Anabaptists, what the Vaudois were to the Taborites. But neither violence nor mildness could cause the principle of fraternity to prevail quickly among men. It was individualism under a deceiving and magnificent name, that is, that false liberty which passes on without turning aside to the slaves of misery and ignorance: this was the only progress which societies could then achieve. Before freeing the social man, it was necessary to free the individual man. Printing was discovered, and according to the expression of Bossuet, the world full of bitterness gave birth to Luther.

CHAPTER II.

INDIVIDUALISM IS INAUGURATED IN THE CHRISTIAN WORLD.

LUTHER.

The revolution in the sixteenth century—It is enveloped in religion, because the State is then enveloped in the Church—Luther, a mystical tribune—He wishes the *christian* to be free, but *man* a slave; he urges on revolts of conscience, and condemns those of misery—All one side of humanity remains excluded from the insurrection of Luther—Luther before Charles the Fifth—In the name of fraternity, the Anabaptists rise like the Hussites, and like them fall; Luther applauds—Progress of the Reformation By what unforeseen consequences it gives an impulse to modern industry—Individualism is inaugurated.

• HERE opens a history much more moving, much more tragical, than that of a people ground down by conquest, or of the battalions who murder them; the history of thought! of thought, everywhere enthusiastic, everywhere excited, breathing strife, seeking the unforeseen, and ready to overthrow the Kingdom of Spirits from one end of Europe to the other.

* *Æneæ Sylvi de Bohem. hist.*, cap. 44. p. 39.

† Consult, on the war of the Hussites, the elegant recital which one of our greatest writers, George Sands, has made in volumes 8th and 13th of the *Revue Indépendante*.

The sixteenth century was the age of intelligence in revolt; it prepared, in commencing with the Church, the ruin of all old powers; it is that which characterizes it. Unknown voices were then raised, refusing to the astonished pope the right of trafficking in Heaven and Hell. At Wittenburg, they overthrew the great cross of red wood which missionaries had reared in the churches, and around which they sold the mercy of God by the pennyworth. Monks threw aside hair cloth and rods, the instruments of their long suicide, whilst others sallying from their cloisters hastened to marry publicly, and to practise piety in love. For the first time excommunications found themselves objects of general derision. It can be truly related, that on such a day, in such a place, students, led on by their teachers, made bonfires with the paper of bulls. Penitents deserted the confessional. The roads of Germany were covered with escaped nuns. Simple laymen taught and preached. Saints in stone or marble were rolled, in many places, down the steps of the temple, insulted and mutilated by a crowd who were indignant at papist idolatry. Nobles everywhere mounted on horseback. A loud noise of arms which the revolutionary clamors governed, was heard in Europe. Rome trembled.

This could evidently only be one of the aspects of revolt. To teach the people to discuss the pope, was to urge them irresistibly to discuss kings. The church had, moreover, long enveloped the state in its destiny. Rome was at the bottom of everything; in striking it, they struck the general system of the world in the heart.

We cannot remember with too much admiration how the thing was done, so marked is here the hand of God in the smallest circumstances.

In 1511, an unknown monk, who was then called brother Augustine, and who was Luther, was seen climbing up Pilate's stair-way at Rome on his knees.* This monk thought that he heard suddenly a celestial voice, saying, "the just shall live by faith." He arose immediately, as if warned by God, and returned full of trouble; his mind a prey to confused disquietudes, and able already to say, "I do not know whence these thoughts come to me." They came to him from his age. It was on this account that their first, their mystical formula was about to be changed into a signal of revolt, which, repeated from city to city, set Europe on fire.

And how much more striking is the result, when we think, that Luther, bold by jerks, was naturally cowardly; that this tribune was a lute-player, a dreamer, a poet; that his grosser transports, his angers, admitted relapses of melancholy; that he was subject to strange doubts, to the most profound dejection; that a thousand contrary powers disputed for his tired soul, his tumultuous and tender soul, formed of violence and love! Besides, what had his life been hitherto? A life divided between the cares of a mendicant student and the prejudices of a monk. Young, he begged from door to door, and obtained alms by singing. Later, on his road from Mansfeldt to Erfurth a storm having overtaken him, he became alarmed, fell with his face to the ground, and swore to become

a monk, thus surrendering himself to the terrible God whom he had felt in the kindled heavens. His entrance into the ever-silent and sombre cloister, his swoons, his efforts to escape from the desires which were gnawing in him, his bitter piety, his alarms, the spectres which descended into his cell with the shades of night, he has himself described, in terms of terrible simplicity.

It must be remarked that the victorious denouncer of so many catholic superstitions, that the persecutor of rationalism, that Luther, in fine, was excessively superstitious, and more simply credulous than any man of his time. Sorcerers, meeting him on the day after Christmas, in a place where four roads met, and holding sinister meetings after sunset; monks accompanied along the length of an unknown road, by the spirit of darkness in the guise of an armed man; a voice rising from hell in the silence of midnight—such were the recitals with which Luther entertained his charmed auditors, such the beliefs he fed in his diseased imagination.* But it was the devil especially whose empire Luther affirmed and dreaded. In the solitude of those troubled nights in which he was preparing the ruin of the old world, he frequently saw the phantoms of his heart arrange themselves around him. Satan then appeared to him, and he, shivering, oppressed, but firm in his faith, entered upon a struggle with his formidable visitor.†

Such was Luther. When he started for Rome, he was what the cloister had made him; his face had not then the florid tint, nor was his flesh as firm as some portraits of him now exhibit him. He showed, on the contrary, long and ardent vigils; his eyes, which have since been compared to those of the falcon, shone with a sinister light, and he had so suffered by thinking, that you might, says an historian of the times, count the bones of his body; his scruples were those of a child of the church.

But what a sight was reserved for him in the holy city. Corruption had there become general, prodigious. Everywhere, were simony, nameless debaucheries,‡ blasphemy, the odor of murder.§—Luther groaned with horror, and on his return to Wittemburg a few years after, in 1517, he commenced his grand attack.

Incomprehensible boldness, if the revolt of a man had not been that of the age!

Though deeply wounded by heresies on one side and the Councils of Constance and Basle on the other, the papacy still appeared full of life. Rome was full of impurities; but what splendors were united to veil them. A group of great men pressed around the pontifical throne. The then Pope was Leo the Tenth, one of the Medicis, and he carried into his high functions, the grace, magnificence and splendid genius of his family.

But beneath all this renown, dwelt death. The reason of it is simple. Power only lasts on condition it preserves the specialty of its functions and the originality of its character. The pope could not have been

* (Table Chat) *Propos de Table*, traduits par Brunet, pars I.

† *Ibid.*, p. 31.

‡ Merle d'Aubigne. *Hist. de la Reform.*, t. 1. p. 73.

§ Ranke. *Hist. de la Papauté*, t. 1. p. 80.

possible but as the spiritual head of humanity, and where could he find his natural support but in the faith of the people? On the very day in which, thinking he had need of any other support, his pride sought it in the genius of artists and of poets, in a tumultuous assemblage of soldiers, in the opulence and possession of vast domains—on that very day, fallen from the height of his majestic isolation, into the crowd of temporal princes, he ceased to be of himself,—he disappeared from the eyes of the earth.

Leo the Tenth would not perhaps have thought of promulgating the indulgences, to which, as is known, Luther's first cry replied, if festivals, donations, the desire of finishing the church commenced by Julius the Second, had not urged the holy See to greediness, by pushing it into poverty. But Leo was seduced by a desire for magnificence, "a fire which burns only on condition of consuming."* He must sell the hat of a cardinal, the dignity of a penitentiary, bishoprics, the salvation of souls. The church was a market, religion a system of imposts, the papacy a model of fiscal government, the christian world a prey.

The secularization of the church, so lively depicted by Erasmus in his *Praise of Folly*,† led invariably to several results baneful to the clergy.

The belief of the people was weakened, the spiritual power which had ruled the middle ages was tottering.

A crowd of princes and nobles, ruined by battles, saw domains to conquer, monasteries to pillage, in an insurrection against Rome.

The Burghers, whom the recent discovery of America urged to industrial pursuits, were angry at having to divide the fruits of their labor with greedy and idle monks.

Finally, the temporal power of the pope created for them a political interest, which might find itself, and frequently did so, in direct opposition to the religious interest.

Add to these, that the people, having become artisans from being soldiers, were beginning to be disgusted with barren disputes; that the scholastic, intellectual nourishment of the middle ages no longer sufficed; that the propagators of ancient genius having escaped from Constantinople when taken by the Turks, had spread themselves through the western world like so many living torches; that if reviving literature had served Rome in Rome, it had only been by rendering it half pagan; that everywhere else, and especially in Germany, it had produced its natural effect and prepared the way for the enfranchisement of reason; that the philological labors of Reuchlin, the writings of Erasmus, astronomical studies, appeared to announce the advent of a profane science, destined to replace theology and to fill the void which the falling papacy must leave in history.

Was there ever a more marvellous concurrence of circumstances for a vast revolution? And yet, in the beginning of his enterprise, Luther hesitated; he had involuntary circumspection towards error, he felt momentarily mortal dread, so difficult it appeared to be to lift the load

* "Quæ instar ignis tantum fulget, quantum consumit." Pallavicini, *Hist. Conc. Trid.* pars 1. lib. 1. cap. 2.

† See "the Praise of Folly." French translation, t. 1. p. 212. By Panable.

under which Europe had until then been weighed down! So great dread could this great figure of the pope yet excite.*

Nothing less than the trade in indulgences, that great irruption of scandal, could have excited Luther. He rose indignant, when he saw Germany on its knees before the strong box of a caravan of impostors, sent from Rome to sell the remission of sins.

The hour of extreme resolutions was thus approaching for Luther. In vain had he wished to stop himself; he was borne on by the movement of the world. The most ardent champions of Rome were the first to launch her into dangers. There they were, pressing with a thousand goads the yet undecided monk, now encouraging him to pride by the expression of their fears, now assailing him with violence in the dispute and irritating him by outrage.† He, either to defend himself, or to attack in his turn, studied the fathers of the church, compared the scriptures, heaped up the materials of formidable erudition, plunged without alarm into the traditions of the church and its most obscure depths. Soon he disdained it, and was led to recognize no other authority than the gospel, no other master than Christ.

When the revolutionary sense of the words, which, at Erfurth, had sprung from the depths of his heart, and which he had since thought he heard on Pilate's stairs at Rome, presented itself clearly to his mind; if, as St. Paul had said, the just shall live by faith, faith was then the great condition of salvation. And if faith were everything and works were nothing, the monk wearing hair cloth, fell below the layman having faith.

On the other hand, he has not faith who wishes it. God gives it or refuses it. Man was not then free. Now, if he was not free to act, the church had nothing to prescribe to him. If he depended on God alone, he had not to bend his head before any human face, and mixed up in one dependence, in the presence of Christ, the lowest of the faithful and the pope were equals. What necessity then for the pope?

Such were the primitive data of protestantism. Do not their consequences already present themselves to you? This pope whom he was moving to overthrow, is a spiritual king; but still he is a king. Throw him down, the others would follow.

They were not long in comprehending this in Germany. Luther had not yet gone further in his attacks, than the question of the indulgences, when an unaccustomed burst of rage was already spread around him. Several foresaw mortal agitations, civil war.‡ In the calm regions in which he dwelt, the Emperor Maximilian could not rid himself of a degree of inquietude. Warned by him,§ Leo finally began to move. He saw well, that the debates were not, as he at first thought, mere disputes of monks.

Luther was fast reaching the time when he could say with more truth

* "Fateor, mi Erasme etc." *Omn. Oper. Lutheri*, t. 3. p. 173.

† Sleidan. *Hist. de la Reformation*, t. 1. p. 9. "Plane ipsum edocuit (Scriptum Prioris) hanc infamiam evitare non posse, nisi oppugnata Romani pontificis potestate." Pallavicini, *Hist. Conc. Trid.* pars 1. lib. 1. cap 6.

‡ Pallavicini, *Hist. Conc. Trid.* pars 1. lib. 1. cap. 6.

§ Sleidan. *Hist. de la Reformation*, t. 1. p. 11.

than Attila had before said, "The stars fall, the earth trembles, I am the hammer of the world."

What have we yet to say? Rome soon came to implore the rebel monk. Miltitz saw him at Altenbourg in the house of Spalatin. He tried the power of flattery* over him, he loaded him with protestations of friendship, he supplicated, he wept.†

Referring afterwards to this when his country and Europe were burning with the fire he had kindled, Luther said, "If the conduct of Miltitz had been that of the Archbishop of Mayence, when I warned him, then that of the pope, before my condemnation by his bulls, the affair might not have created so great a tumult. Now, they ask counsel in vain; they set their wits to work in vain."‡ Nothing shows better, how little Luther himself was in the secret of his own work. No; more prudence at the outset would not have prevented this work. What! can the conduct of a few men, their wisdom or their folly, influence facts by which half the world will be moved? Every one collects and combines, the grains of sand of the stream, according to his fancy; but no one advances or retards the hour of the rising tide.

The year 1519 opened, and on the 12th of January, the Emperor Maximilian died. It is well known that the imperial crown remained for a long time suspended between Francis the First and Charles the Fifth, both too heavy for Germany, and both too formidable for Leo the Tenth. It was offered to Frederick of Saxony, but he refused it, and refusing it, placed it on the head of Charles the Fifth. Now, this generous refusal which Pallavicini§ celebrates as an inspiration from on high, as a shining mark of the presence of God for the Catholic church, this refusal was, however, of advantage to the Reformation, in consequence of the state of moral inferiority and voluntary dependence in which it placed Charles V. towards the protector of Luther. Thus we shall see from this time blows struck at the pontifical throne, succeeding each other without interruption, the Reformation hastening on, and the Diet of Worms will not arrest it.

Strange and ordinary destiny of the thinking powers. The famous dispute of Leipsic, which produced so much emotion in Germany, was provoked by the fiercest partisans of Rome.|| Students crowding from all the Universities of Germany, flowed tumultuously into the city and hastened with curiosity to that novel tourney, in which were about to be exchanged, not vain blows of the lance, but terrible ideas and irreparable words. Luther was brought to combat the primacy of the bishop of Rome, to deny that it was of divine right, to reject ecclesiastical tradition, and to accept, at least in part, the revolutionary inheritance of

* "Ecce ubi unum pro papa stare inveni, tres pro te contra papam stabant." *Omn. Oper. Lutheri*, t. 1. præfatio.

† *Pallavicini, Hist. Conc. Trid.*, pars 1. p. 19.

‡ *Lutheri præfatio*.

§ "Tam excelsa repudiate etc." *Pallavicini, lib. 1. cap. 22.*

|| See in the 1st vol. of the Latin works of Luther, from page 199 B. to page 244 B., the chapter called: *Disputatio Lipsiæ habita, anno 19 a notariis excepta*, and again, *Sleidan, lib. 1. p. 48 and 49; Pallavicini, p. 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24; and Seckendorf, from p. 72.*

the Martyr of Constance. It is now of no interest to us, whether he gained the question, before so violently debated, over his adversary by erudition and eloquence. The result alone concerns us, and that result is found in the nature of the three following declarations, which were to resound through all the echoes of Germany :

"I grant that the church militant is a monarchy ; but its head is not a man, it is Christ."*

"If, in speaking of the building of the church, St. Augustin and the other fathers, have desired to designate by the word *Petros*, the Apostle St. Peter, I would resist them singlehanded."†

"It is certain, that among the articles of John Huss or the Bohemians, many are perfectly Christian, and in conformity with the gospel."‡

Thus, more of human sovereignty founded on divine right ; instead of the principle of authority, the individual sentiment ; and for tradition, that of the revolts of conscience unjustly oppressed.

There were at the end of such novelties a revolution and an abyss. The bishop of Brandenburg was so deeply moved, that he exclaimed when casting a brand into the fire, "would that I could thus cast this Martin Luther into the flames."§ As a defender of the old state of things, the bishop had reason to be alarmed—the Reformation was about to utter its war cry.

Was it a cry of salvation ? The pope once beaten down, did Luther intend to set the masters of the earth to rights ? The people were suffering in soul and body, they were superstitious and miserable ; there was a double servitude to destroy. Did Luther intend to lend a hand to this ? No ; for in this revolutionary movement, the monk rested. In a book which he published some months after the discussion at Leipzig, and which so many authors deceived, by the title, have taken for a chart of the enfranchisement of the human race, in the writing styled *Of Christian Liberty*, Luther maintained that the life of man being a combat between the flesh and the spirit, the liberty of the Christian should be entirely spiritual and internal. "What matters it to the soul," he said, "whether the body is well, whether it is free and lively, whether it eats and drinks ; whether it acts of its own will ; do not even the slaves of crime partake of these ? And on the other hand, what obstacles do ill health, captivity, or hunger, or thirst, or external evil of any kind, oppose to the soul ? Have not the most pious men, those most free by the purity of their consciences, been subject to all this ?"||

Thus Luther appeared to enlist himself in the subjugation of one half of man, and showed a readiness to leave all the material side of humanity without his revolt. It was the most profound and fatal of the errors of this mystical tribune.

The soul and body are united by bonds which it is folly and cruelty to overlook. The mind becomes enervated in a blighted body, and if the

* "*Monarchiam Ecclesiæ Militantis.*" Omn. Oper. Lutheri, t. 1. p. 200 A.

† "*Resistam eis ego unus.*" Omn. Oper. Lutheri, t. 1. p. 207 B.

‡ "*Hoc certum est inter articulos. Joh: Huss.*" Omn. Oper. Lutheri, t. 1. p. 108, A.

§ Seckendorf, Comment. de Lutheranismo, lib. 1. p. 80.

|| "*Quid enim prodesset queat animæ ?*" De libertate Christiana. Omn. Oper. Lutheri, t. 1. p. 387, B.

body is accustomed to bend, sooner or later the soul will become abased. Doubtless there are those who remain free in a dungeon, and who are kings in rags. We have seen those who died standing; but the number of men with such powerful hearts is very small, and heroism is still less necessary as societies become less imperfect. Why shall not man reach by stages the realization within himself of that divine law of harmony which maintains the peace of worlds regularly borne on through the silence of the heavens? Then perhaps may cease that gnawing of human wretches, which, since the beginning and always in vain, mounts to God through history.

It is probable that Luther in the beginning was not aware of the formidable character of his enterprise. When he saw all that that ditch which he dug could devour and hold; when the presentiments of his genius showed him in the distance, all those prelates, kings, princes, nobles, holding each other by the hand, dragging one another along, a solid crowd, and finally falling in a common fall, he recoiled in alarm. It was on this account he hastened to separate the soul from the body, only designating spiritual tyrannies for the blows of the insurgent people and demanding that temporal tyrannies should remain inviolable. In approving of the revolts of devotion, he was preparing himself to condemn those of hunger. He was desirous of destroying priests and saving princes. Thus we shall hear him say with Rome, "My kingdom is not of this world," when bolder logicians shall draw the conclusion of his doctrines. And he should have recollected that by means of this fatal text, badly understood, badly interpreted, Rome had rendered patient even to hebetude, the pains of the condemned in this world, and consecrated the long scandal of people resigned beneath unpunished oppressors.

But thought is not arrested in its revolt and on its way. To claim freedom for the christian led to claiming liberty for man. Luther, whether he wished or not, led straight to Münzer. This has not escaped Bossuet. "Luther," exclaims bitterly, the illustrious author of the *Variations*, "Luther by affirming that the christian was subject to no man, nourished the spirit of independence among the people and gave dangerous views to their leaders."*

On the 23d of June, 1520, Luther published his *Appeal to the German nobility on the reformation of Christianity*, and this powerful declamation resounded like a thunder bolt throughout Germany. What delayed it? Had the Roman tyranny yet something to add to its excesses? Why did not the nobles rise to deliver Germany, to avenge it? It spoke of an ecclesiastical society distinct from the laical society; falsehood! All christians were priests, and he was not monk, bishop, cardinal, nor pope, who did not submit to the powers who hold the sword. "The pope eats the grain and gives us the straw," said Luther, addressing the emperor, and as if in resumption of his terrible pamphlet.

Rome could not remain indifferent to the blows of Luther; it is however doubtful, whether Leo, if left to himself, would have hurried vigorous

* Hist. des Variations, lib. 2. t. 5, of the complete works, p. 536.

measures. Of an easy character, and an amiable, generous nature, Leo the Tenth was a man to love the German monk for his learning, his eloquence and the lustre of his stormy genius. But priests of meditative intellects, somber and alarmed logicians hastened to the laughing friend of Raphael. They painted to him Germany on fire, the church consumed, the consciences of the people agitated by unknown desires, a new and baneful impulse impressed upon the future; and on the 15th of June, 1520, appeared the famous bull which gave Luther sixty days to retract, and that day passed, anathematized him. It commenced in these terms, "Arise Lord, and judge thine own cause."*

During this time Luther was increasing in strength, in prosperity, in boldness. Some nobles, Sylvester of Schauenburg, Francis of Sickingen, promised him their protection.† And he, more and more animated for the combat, wrote to Spalatin,—“The humility which I have until now shown, and vainly, will come to an end; it has inflated the enemies of the Gospel too much.”‡ Then appeared blow on blow, those books which Germany snatched, books full of sublime anger and trivial delirium, strange, monstrous, but irresistible, in which were jumbled the mystic and the buffoon, the pamphleteer and the prophet.

More than three centuries have passed since Luther, and it is still by means of the sacraments that the rule of the church is exercised and maintained. By means of them the church holds possession of man from the cradle to the tomb. Scarcely born, she hastens to call him into the temple, baptizes him and makes him her own. A child, she marks him with her sign. An adult, she pronounces him a husband, and authorizes him to become a father. A culprit, she interrogates, condemns or absolves him. Dying, she lays her hands upon him as if to rid him of his agony. Dead, she confides him to the earth, and even beyond the tomb, she pursues him into regions eternally unknown. It is this prodigious empire which Luther sought to undermine in his book of the *Babylonish Captivity of the Church*. He reduced the sacraments to three, baptism, penance, the eucharist; and he made virtue to consist in the faith of the Christian, and not in the intervention of the priest.§

This formidable book had not yet appeared, when the bull which struck Luther, reached Germany. He, inflamed by anger, determined to astonish men.

On the 10th of December, 1520, placards announced to the youth of Wittemberg, that a great sight was to be exhibited at nine o'clock in the morning, at the western gate. The hour having come, they set themselves in motion. The crowd was immense. A funeral pile was erected on the designated spot, and a celebrated professor set fire to it. Then Luther approaching said, “thou hast vexed the holy of the Lord; let the eternal fire consume thee;” and he cast the book of decretals and the bull into the flames.||

* “Exsurge Domine et judica causam tuam. Omn. Oper. Lutheri, t. 1. p. 423.

† Seckendorf, Comment. de Lutherianismo, lib. 1. p. 444.

‡ “Amplius inflari hostes Evangelii.” Apud Seckendorf, p. 144.

§ De Captivitate Babylonica Ecclesie. Omn. Oper. Lutheri, t. 2. p. 263, A.

|| Exustionis Antichristianarum decretalium acta. Omn. Oper. Lutheri, t. 2. p. 320, A.

Since the first of December, he had protested by his famous piece styled, *Against the Execrable Bull of Anti-Christ*, "I would rather die a thousand times than retract a single syllable of the condemned articles, and since they excommunicated me, for their sacrilegious heresy, I excommunicate them. I, in the name of the holy truth of God, Christ our judge, will see which of the two excommunications avail.*

The pope excommunicated in the face of nations, and by the son of an obscure miner of Mansfield! There was an universal start in Germany. Learned cities were moved by the voices of a thousand powerful scholars. They could no longer wait for the books of the reformer. Former monks carried them about for distribution. At Nuremburg, at Strasburgh, at Mayence, the leaves which bore the condemnation of Rome fixed in an indelible imprint, passed still wet from hand to hand. And for this rapid issue of the thoughts of a monk, for this so threatening and sudden illumination of Germany, we must recognize, that the press spread the news among men. Luther, he has said it himself, felt himself borne on the popular breeze.† Luther filled Germany. It is true, that before him might rise upright, the figure of Charles the Fifth, serious and irritated; but he derived advantage from the circumspection of this same emperor, then young, and who from timidity, united himself to prudence; he had also, to assist him, the disorders introduced into the church, the festivals in which Leo the Tenth forgot his undermined empire, the exhaustion of the old forms of oppression, and that need of change which is the life of history.

The movement in Germany was too lively not to be communicated to Europe. The north inclined to follow Luther; but the superstitious countries of the south were moved in a contrary direction. They asked with disquietude, whither these strange novelties led, and if it was God who was setting them to work. It did not escape some among them, that a political revolution would spring, sooner or later, from such religious innovations, because they nourished "a spirit of independence in the people and gave dangerous views to their leaders." The anxiety became general. A solemn diet had been convened at Worms; it met there on the 6th of January, 1521, and all looks were turned towards the throne on which was seated Charles the Fifth, already grave, taciturn, and at twenty, master of his thoughts.

By a rare concurrence of circumstances, Charles reigned at Vienna, Naples, Saragossa, Valladolid, Brussels, and his rule reached beyond the seas to the American Continent. Between the pope and Luther, if Charles the Fifth leaned to one side, he appeared to be able to make the world lean to the same side. How was he about to decide?

Charles the Fifth did not hesitate long. To establish himself the judge of Luther, agreed with his policy and pleased his pride. He perceived that by it, he would present himself to Europe as the arbiter of the affairs of Christendom, as the supreme protector of the popes. Perhaps also, his profound soul felt a natural disdain for the vulgar proceed-

* "Christus judex viderit utra excommunicatio apud eum valeat." Omn. Oper. Lutheri, t. 2. p. 292, A.

† "Fovebat me aura ista popularis." Omn. Oper. Lutheri, t. 1. præfatio.

ings of violence; on those heights on which fortune had placed him, he might think himself strong enough to be unjust.

Since the 21st of December, 1520, the elector Frederick had asked of Luther what he would do if he were called to Worms, and Luther had replied, he would obey, "recommending his cause to Him who had saved the three children in the fiery furnace,"*—only he claimed a safe conduct.† He obtained it through the solicitation of Frederick; and the most powerful monarch of the earth at that period, Charles the Fifth, wrote to a lately obscure and now excommunicated monk, "to our honorable, dear and devout Doctor, Martin Luther, of the order of the Augustins."‡

On the 2d of April, 1521, Luther left Wittemburg to go to Worms, on a cart covered with a cloth, such as the Germans then used.§ Near him were, enveloping him in their courageous friendship, Armsdorf, Schurf and Suaven. A simple monk, he was preceded by a herald, bearing the eagle of the Empire.|| This journey was a marked period in the life of the reformer. Luther proved in it the painful exaltation, which the majesty of certain danger produces. At Erfurt, he became melancholy, on perceiving the cloister in which the flower of his life had withered in solitary combats; now as the day was passing, he seated himself at the foot of a wooden cross, on a stone which covered the ashes of one he loved, and there he fell into such reveries, that night having arrived, he did not hear the bell of the convent calling to repose. Sad phantoms also appeared to run about him, and press around him during his whole journey. In one place they brought before his eyes a portrait of the Florentine martyr, Savonarola; in another, they recalled to his mind the tragical history of a safe conduct violated and of Sigismund and John Huss.¶ Traversing a city he heard the condemnation of his books cried through the streets. But sick as he was, he was pledged to himself to see it out. "I shall enter Worms," he said, "in defiance of the gates of hell, and of the powers of the air."** There is shown at some distance from Worms a tree, which a peasant was in the act of planting as Luther passed. "Permit me," said the traveller to the peasant, "to place it in the earth, and may my doctrine grow like its branches." "The tree grew," exclaims a modern author, a fervent Catholic, recalling the fact; "and the doctrine, what has become of it!"†† The doctrine, you will find condemned in its turn, and half buried under the ruins it made. But from this pile of ruins, if justice finally prevails, active generations will rear buildings entirely new and of immortal beauty.

On the 6th of April, Luther entered Worms, and alighted at the hotel

* "*Deo commendatum esse causam qui tres pueros in fornace ignis servaverit.*" Omn. Oper. Lutheri, t. 1. p. 148, B.

† Omn. Oper. Lutheri, t. 1. p. 148.

‡ "*Honorabili nostro dilecto, devoto doctori Martin Lutheri, Augustiani Ordinis.*" Omn. Oper. Lutheri, t. 2. p. 411. B.

§ Seckendorf, *Comment. de Lutheranismò*, lib. 3. p. 152.

|| Viti Warbecii *relatio*, apud Seckendorf, t. 1. lib. 1. p. 153.

¶ Sleidan. *Hist. de la Reformation*, t. 1. lib. 3. p. 94.

** Seckendorf, *Comment. de Lutheranismò*, lib. 1. p. 152.

†† Audin. *Hist. de Luther*, t. 1. p. 342.

of the Knights of Rhodes. The whole city poured forth in a tumult to see this monster, says Pallavicini, a monster of wisdom or iniquity.* He, full of emotion, but intrepid, said, leaping from his car, "God will be for me."† When, however, he found himself alone with his own thoughts, and thought before what an assemblage of imposing and terrible personages he was about to render an account of so many beings that he had dared, of the principle of authority weakened, of the old rules of conscience changed, and of that approaching, that inevitable stirring of the people, his glory, or his crime, he became troubled and prayed in anguish. Luther showed an indecision which surprises us, in the presence of the assembled princes and of Charles the Fifth, and in which Catholic and Protestant historians have erred in seeing, the one an admirable modesty, the others the want of faith and fear. The truth is, in the first audience, Luther appeared to hesitate, and asked for time for reflection.‡ It was granted to him, until the next day. But Charles the Fifth was caught in disdaining a man who did not brave him. He thought he would have essayed to equalize himself with him by boldness, which is the strength of the weak and the dignity of inferiors.

On the next day, however, Luther recovered himself. The fiscal of Treves having demanded of him in the name of the emperor, if he admitted the books whose titles had been read to him on the preceding evening, and if he consented to retract them, he replied in a speech full at once of humility and grandeur. He remarked, that among his books were some which had been recognized by his adversaries themselves as pious and in conformity with the gospel: there was nothing in them to retract. As for those in which he had stood up against the papacy and papists, against impure doctrines and impious examples, the scourge of the christian world, he declared his inability to deny them without becoming an accomplice in the tyranny. He confessed, however, that in his purely polemical writings, he had been sometimes more violent than was becoming his situation and a christian. He appealed from the infirmity of human judgments to the infallible word of God.§ After a short deliberation of the princes, the fiscal of Treves imperiously summoned Luther to declare whether he retracted or not. Then this poor monk said to these warriors, with a sombre face and an irritated heart, "Behold me! I cannot be otherwise—may God assist me."|| He had spoken at first in Latin, then in German; he was exhausted and the sweat trickled down his forehead. But the shades of night were already falling upon the hall. They separated.

Luther left Worms on the 26th of April, 1521. From Friedburg he wrote a submissive, almost supplicatory letter to Charles the Fifth; but in which he said, "My cause is that of the whole earth."¶ He was answered by an edict of proscription.

* "Tota civitas sollicite confluit, quo monstrum spectaret, seu sapientiæ, seu nequitie." Pallavicini, *Hist. Conc. Frid.*, t. 1. pars. 1. lib. 1. cap. 26.

† "Deus pro me stabit." Pallavicini, *Hist. Conc. Trid.*, t. 1. pars. 1. lib. 1. cap. 26.

‡ Acta reverendi patris, Martini Lutheri, coram Cæsarea majestate, etc., in comitiis principum Wormatiæ. *Omn. Oper. Lutheri*, t. 2. p. 412, B.

§ See this speech in the Latin works of Luther, t. 2. p. 414, A.

|| "Adjuvet me Deus." Seckendorf, *Comment. de Lutherismo*, lib. 1. p. 154.

¶ Sleidan, lib. III. p. 100.

He nevertheless continued his journey. He was returning from the village of Mora, whither he had gone to salute his grandmother, accompanied by his brother James and Armsdorf, and was passing through the woods of Thuringia, when some masked horsemen appeared suddenly. They stopped the carriage, seized Luther, placed him on horseback, having first thrown a horseman's cloak over him, and taking him with them, disappeared in the depths of the forest. At midnight, they reached the gates of a castle, an old residence of the landgraves and situated on solitary heights.* There these unknown warriors left him. He remained there several months enveloped in a profound mystery, assailed by fantastic alarms, and seeing no one but two noble boys, who brought him his daily food. The order to conceal him so as to put him out of reach of his enemies, came from the Elector of Saxony. But the asylum chosen was for a long time unknown to Frederick himself, where, by imposing a voluntary ignorance on himself, was enabled, without a falsehood, to keep the hiding place of the proscribed, concealed.†

Thus removed from the active world, Luther became only more imposing. For a short time he was thought to be dead; his dead body, it was said, had been found pierced with blows. His partisans then groaned, they became indignant, and so great was the rage of some of them, that the two nuncios of the pope ran a risk of their lives.‡ But the truth was not long in being suspected, if not known. The thoughts of the reformer were moreover hovering over moved Germany. Whilst Leo the Tenth was dying at Rome, Luther, from the heights of the Wartburg, was spreading with greater profusion than ever, the inspirations of his indomitable mind and the bitter treasures of his hatred.

His letters, which he dated from the *region of the air, from the regions of the birds, from Patmos*, guided his friends, encouraged their hopes; and, by his books, he excited and stirred up the people. Now he thundered against private masses,§ now against domestic vows.|| The Bible, which he translated into German, added literary glory to the splendor which irradiated him; and with it in their hands, the people learned to sit in judgment on the commentaries of Rome.

From thence resulted, however, excesses of a nature calculated to shake the reign of the Reformer. From a verse of the Bible sprang the war against images; the statues were insulted and broken at Wittemburg, the *Church of all Saints* was pitilessly devastated, Carlstadt animating the crowd by voice and gesture. Luther was surpassed. He knew it and did not wait for the permission of the Elector of Saxony to quit his dungeon; he left it suddenly, irritated and impetuous; the monk of former days seemed to have disappeared. Luther called himself the Knight George. He advanced on horseback with a sword by his side, wearing the cuirass of a man-at-arms. His entrance into Wittemburg was a triumph; he had scarcely arrived there, when he preached, and a few sermons brought back every thing beneath his control.

* Sleidan, t. 1. lib. 3. p. 105. Fra Paolo. liv. 1. p. 14. Pallavicini, liv. 1. cap. 28.

† Pallavicini, Hist. Conc. Trid., lib. 2. p. 46.

§ Omn. Oper. Lutheri, t. 2. p. 441, A.

‡ Ibid. ized by Google

|| Ibid. p. 447. B.

Thus regulated, the movement extended with great rapidity. The mass was openly abolished, and by the public authorities, at Frankford, Hamburg and Nuremberg.* The Prince of Anhalt caused the Lutheran doctrine to be preached in his dominions; it invaded the duchies of Lauenburg, Mecklenburg, Brunswick, traversed Livonia and reached the Baltic. In Siwtzerland, in which the pure gospel began to be preached in 1516, Zwinglius combated the celibacy of the priests,† challenged the Vicar General of the Bishop of Constance to a religious discussion, and induced the Senate of Zurich to pass a decree providing that the gospel should be taught without mixing with it the commandments of men.‡

One of the greatest inconsistencies of Luther, is, the having admitted into religion, and rejected in political matters, the right of resistance to tyranny; he it was who recommended unceasing obedience to the temporal powers, be they what they might; he it was who boasted, that he had returned to Wittenburg to prevent a violent sedition from breaking out in Germany;§ he dared everything against princes, when a point of theological doctrine was in question. Henry the Eighth, King of England, having had the imprudence to print a writing of his chaplain in refutation of the Book of the *Captivity of Babylon*, Luther stormed against the royal theologian to the last excess of fury and outrage. "Thou liest," he exclaimed in his reply, "stupid and sacrilegious king, thou, who with an impudent face placest another than the proper meaning on the infallible words of God,"|| etc.—So that Luther was at once undermining the papacy, braving the Emperor of Germany, and seeking to cover with opprobrium the King of England. With what spell after this, could human powers remain surrounded in the eyes of the people? Luther himself urged on those political revolutions, whose incomplete condition horrified him.

When thousands of voices repeated against kings and princes, the cry which he had taught them to utter against Rome, when impatient of the yoke of their former servitude, the peasants of Germany drew up, in twelve articles, a programme of their claims, so closely resembling the resolutions of the French Revolution, it is known with what violence Luther broke out against them, with what haughtiness he preached to them the duties of patient submission and resigned slavery. It is also known with what savage joy he celebrated their extermination in that famous war which covered Germany with desolation and ruins. It is true that the revolt of the peasants sprang from a rival doctrine. It was in the name of the principle of human fraternity, of which anabaptism was then the religious form—it was at the voice of Storck and Münzer, that the peasants had taken up arms. It was on that account

* Sockendorf, Comment. de Lutherismo, p. 241.

† Sleidan, Hist. de la Reformation, t. 2. liv. 3., p. 112.

‡ Sleidan, Hist. de la Reformation, t. 1. liv. 3. p. 126.

§ "Nequa magna et horribilis seditio in Germania oritur." Epistola duci Frederico in qua redivitum suum ex Pathmo excusat, Lutheri, t. 2. p. 327, A.

|| "Mentiris rex stolide et sacrilege." Contra regem anglie. Omn. Oper. Lutheri, t. 2. p. 327, A.

Luther did not pardon them. The only doctrine men were then in a condition to accept was individualism, and Luther did not come to offer them another.

Behold how everything hastens itself. In the north of Germany, monastic vows had been abolished, churches despoiled; the new church was organizing itself amid a thousand hesitations; against the celibacy of the priests, example must be added to precept; Luther marries, leading back the Reformation to its point of departure; Erasmus puts forth his book on *free will*, and thus forces Luther to say on that decisive question the last word of the revolution that he had accomplished. The defiance was boldly accepted. "No, exclaims the prophet of Wittemburg, in what concerns God, in what concerns his safety or his damnation, man has not a free will. He is submitted either to the will of God, or that of Satan: he is enchained, he is a slave."* It was, either to return to the manicheism which gave up the universe to the strife of two rival Genii, or, as Bossuet has well said, to render God the author of all crimes.† We shall see what terrible social consequences Calvin drew from this doctrine of predestination so boldly advanced by Luther.

The strifes, which the Reformation bore in its breast, announced themselves moreover from its very origin. Soon after the decree of the Diet of Spires, against which the reformed protested, and which procured for them, as is known, the name of Protestants, two men met at Marburg, through the exertions of the Landgrave of Hesse. They were the prophet of Wittemburg and the new apostle of Switzerland, Luther and Zwinglius. Was God really present in the Eucharist under the appearance of bread and wine? Yes, said Luther and his disciples; but the Sacramentarians and Zwinglius, their leader, saw only a symbol in the Eucharist. For the reformation was scarcely installed when anarchy already invaded its opinions and pierced it. At the colloquy of Marburg, Luther was accompanied by Melancthon, Osiander, Jonas and Agricola. Zwinglius had as his lieutenants, Hedio, Bucer and that Melancthon of the Sacramentarians, that Ecolampadus, whose eloquence was so bewitching, that, according to Erasmus, it might have seduced the very elect themselves; the debate was animated, agreement was impossible. As, however, they were separating, Zwinglius was seized with a feeling of tenderness, and with his hands clasped and his eyes bathed in tears, approached Luther, saying, "At least let us remain brethren." Luther repulsed him.‡ Sad effervescence of pride, well capable of destroying that which was only the work of man, but not that which was an evolution of history.

Catholicism had singularly abused its strength and distorted its mission; and yet on the eve of seeing the foundation stones of such an edifice fall, what soul endowed with elevation and tenderness, would not be struck with melancholy and regret? What! those splendid festivals,

* "Subjectus et servus est vel voluntatis Dei, vel voluntatis Satanae." De Servo Arbitrio. Omn. Oper. Lutheri, t. 3. p. 172, B.

† Hist. des Variations, liv. 2. p. 539.

‡ Ulembergius. Vita et res gestæ Philippi Melancthonis, cap. 5. p. 41. Colonis Agrippinæ, 1622.

the spectacles of the multitude; those cathedrals, the dwellings of the poor, more splendid than the residences of sovereigns; that language of by-gone days, which an ignorant people murmured in prayer, and whose mysterious syllables bore to heaven the aspirations of simple hearts and their confused hopes, those hymns, that perfume in the temples, those figures on the old panes of glass; that worship of patron saints, friendly gods, familiar gods, who replaced beneath the christian roof the ancient penates; those cloisters open for wounded souls, for the vigilant devotion of the monk of the Alps, for the sadness of Heloise—was all this truly destined to perish?

Thus Melancthon was profoundly grieved at the approach of the decisive hour. "Grace," he exclaimed to Luther, "for the jurisdiction of the bishops, grace for the festivals our childhood loved, and which were the pious delight of our fathers." Selected to write the confession of faith, which, in 1530, the reformer presented to the diet of Augsburg, he brought to this celebrated work infinite moderation and caution: useless effort! the confession of faith was not accepted; and nothing is more touching and solemn, than the anguish to which Melancthon then abandoned himself. "I employ my days in weeping,"* he wrote to Luther. In vain did Luther endeavor to sustain and console him. With his eye fixed on the horizon, he was already assisting at the sight of Germany bathed in blood, of Europe become a battle field.

We are not ignorant of what might have been prophetic in this disquietude, we who now remember Charles the Fifth at Muhlburg, the Duke of Alva and his executioners in the Low Countries, Calvinism armed against the league in France, Gustavus Adolphus and Tilly in the plains of Leipsic, Wallenstein and Gustavus Adolphus in the plains of Lutzen, and finally, England ruled by the soldiers of Cromwell, and giving the tragedy of White Hall as a precedent for the 21st of January.

What, then, of evil and of good, did this new doctrine which characterizes and entirely fills the sixteenth century contain? Before analyzing it, let us resume its acts.

- The church, by attributing to itself the privilege of interpreting the divine word and of regulating the meaning of scriptures, had thus taken possession of the whole human soul: the reformation demanded that mediators should disappear, that the faithful should approach God; it rejected the authority of traditions, it placed before the people on their knees a translated bible and an open gospel.

The church had said to the faithful: "confess yourselves, fast, adore the priest at the altar, where he makes God descend; buy indulgences, practice what I order and you shall have heaven;" the reformation covered works purely external with disdain; it affirmed, that since the original sin, man was incapable of saving himself by himself and his own works; that it was grace alone which could operate in us to believe in the benefit of the blood shed by Christ; to believe in redemption by a living and strong faith, there was safety.

* "*Versamur hic in miserrimis curis et plane perpetuis lachrymis.*" Ep. Mel. ap. Ulem. p. 52.

In prohibiting priests from marrying, the church had placed the religious society on one side, the civil on the other; the reformation, to join together the two halves of the world which had been separated, exalted family life.

The church reigned in temporal things through its hierarchy; the reformation repeated the cry of the Vaudois, "all christians are priests."

Finally, the reformation struck to its very vitals that rule which Rome had so skilfully established, when, addressing itself to our senses, it had invented spectacles of unequalled pomp, built churches of unmodelled beauty, and called the delighted people into these temples so adorned by breathing pictures, and which they inundated, at the hours of common prayer, with floods of light, harmony and incense.

Thus there was not a blow of Luther's which was not intended to dissolve the great association, formed under the empire of the principle of authority, in the city of the pontiffs.

And now, if from the results of the reformation, we approach its maxims, what will be our surprise to find them, on every point, contrary?

The reformation commanded reason to humble itself before faith; and yet rationalism prevailed.

It made the scriptures the sole, the immutable rule of belief; and yet the right of examination was unchained.

Taking from men free will, it nailed them to fatalism; and yet human societies became more active than ever.

It declared the race of Adam hurled, by original sin, into an abyss of impotence and corruption; and yet abandoned to his own strength, isolated from his kind, man has believed himself great enough to suffice of himself.

So that the doctrine which appeared to be the best to condemn individualism, was precisely that which introduced it into the world.

How can we explain this strange phenomenon? The explanation is very simple.

What could affirm the infallibility of the scriptures, when the right of the church to fix their meaning was denied? Placed without a commentary before the eyes of the multitude, might not the holy text open a career for an ardent strife, to which each would bring the testimony and the pride of his reason?

On the other hand, to assure man that he is a slave of a spiritual will, in his superior order, was it not to lead him to concentrate all his activity in the material order?

There is no doubt that the doctrine of predestination as interpreted by the Lutherans, did not abase man too much before God; but be careful that this humbled man on whom it is thus acting, is not only a servant, a herdsman or a beggar; he is the master and the king, the emperor, the Pope. Between the monarch and the shepherd there is equality of reprobation. Social distinctions must then disappear before the level of universal misfortune. If there is a distinction to make, it will be no longer, but between the elect who has grace, and the cast-away who has it not. But what is called *grace* in theology, in politics will be called *merit*; and to social pride will succeed individual pride, to the sovereignty

of rank, that of the person. Yes! the Reformation said to man, condemned, imbecile and miserable creature, thou art of no account, but through the blood of God who ransomed thee. It is on that sacrifice and not on thy pretended pious acts that thy eternal salvation depends, and holiness consists not in external practices; it inhabits the sanctuary of an humble and believing heart. To believe thyself saved, is to be so already. If thou hast implored Christ to grant thee faith, what matters the rest? Thou canst sleep on that sweet pillow.

Now it happened that in Holland, England and America, among the great Protestant people, who had become workmen, man replied,

Since, in spiritual paths, I shall not be able to escape from the shame of my impotence, I will seek elsewhere the proof and the conditions of my greatness. Since the fatalism of predestination snatches from my grasp things beyond the tomb, this impetuous condition of my soul, which is inseparable from my being, will attach itself to the things of this world. As I have a heart full of powerful emotion, as my strength requires employment, my desires space, I will only reject the practices with which Catholicism has embarrassed the religious life, to bound passionately into a life of industry. Leaving to grace, leaving to God the care of finding me a place in the kingdom of heaven, I will endeavor to seize upon the kingdom of the earth. I will build immense workshops, I will equip ships; my roads shall pierce mountains; and if I ever carry on wars, if I march to the East, it will not be any longer to deliver the Holy Sepulchre, but to take possession of the globe, my domain. Thus arises a new principle of action, a new end for activity; it was individualism, industry, which, unknown to its own teachers, the Reformation came to inaugurate in the world.

CHAPTER III.

INDIVIDUALISM IN RELIGION.

CALVIN.

CALVIN the legislator of the spirit of revolt—He divides the world into the *Elect* and *Castaways*: the contra-revolutionary meaning of this doctrine—Calvinism, a new kind of oppression, is only suited to a military feudality—On this account it enters France through the nobles and seeks to establish its dominion by the sword—Its fierce and religious part sinks there with the armed feudality—Individualism passes on, transforming itself from fields of battle to books, from theology to politics, from the camp of a warlike nobility, to the domain of peaceful and industrious burgherism.

SINCE the coming of Luther all the old powers were in check. Luther had united against himself, by the effects of an inevitable adhesion, the Pope and the Emperor, Leo the Tenth, and Charles the Fifth. The principle of authority was tottering; two men rose at the same time, the one to defend and strengthen it, the other to imitate it: they were Ignatius Loyola and Calvin.

It is known what was permitted to the first to accomplish, and how strange is the period of his life, which shows him to us, tired of the

glory of a soldier, but greedy of a new glory, assailed by visions, a prey to a kind of internal demon, now climbing mountains with a rapid step, as if to reach God, now under the empire of some supernatural revelation, stopping in tears on the threshold of churches, and remaining there for whole hours, oppressed, immovable; then one day, his soul filled with pious ardor mingled with chivalric recollections, going to suspend his buckler to an image of the virgin, and after having *watched his arms** before this image, pledging himself to the service of heaven. And Calvin, like him in nothing. Here, instead of an impetuous and tender nature, instead of a man joining the illuminism of the *Alumbrados* to the adventurous humor of wandering knights, we find a close and subtle logician, the master of his feelings. Calvin possessed all the qualities of an organizer; power of meditation, connection in his ideas, courage, an obstinate and violent conviction.

And yet the conception originating from Calvin was to perish, whilst to a Spanish soldier, a poet, an illuminé, remained the honor of having left political regulations of an incomparable depth, and of having founded that Society of Jesus, which was to prolong the existence of Rome, by absorbing it, to become the safeguard of thrones placed in its tutelage.

It was because Ignatius Loyola was consistent with his principles, which was not the case with Calvin.

In making blind and unlimited obedience the rule of his *Institutes*, Ignatius Loyola employed a means in conformity with his end, which was to combat individualism and to tame it.

But to wish to continue Luther and create a Protestant papacy—to wish to erect himself into a despotic legislator by free examination, was to attempt an impossibility. And this is just what Calvin did, when in 1535, he published his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

No where have the rights of authority been proclaimed with so much exaggeration, as in this code of Protestantism. "It is," says Calvin, "as indispensable to man, as bread, water, sun and air."† And he does not ask only for the power to maintain material order; he asks for himself, to punish sacrileges, offences against religion, and to prevent the germs of idolatry from being sown among the people, lest they blaspheme the holy will of God.‡ Behold Calvin crossing at a bound the immense interval which separates protestantism from theocracy.

It was necessary to justify this monstrous inconsistency; it was necessary to tell how such a despotism could be reconciled with the recognized right of each to decide the sense of Scripture for himself, and to follow no other guide than the grace given from on high; Calvin supposed that grace granted to the elect the privilege of understanding his divine word *in the same way*. The union of those elect, he called, in opposition to Rome, the true church; and he thought he had thus regained the lost unity in the liberty of conscience.§ Vain shift! He forgot

* Ranke. Hist. de la papauté, t. i. p. 246.

† "Politum usus non minor inter homines, quam panis, aquæ, solis et aëris." Instit. Christ. Relig. lib. iv. cap. 20. p. 550, Geneva, 1559.

‡ Instit. Chris. Relig., lib. iv. cap. 20. p. 550.

§ "De vera ecclesia cum qua nobis colenda est unitas, quia piorum omnium mater est." Instit. Chris. Relig., lib. iv. cap. 1. p. 370.

that protestantism whilst yet in its cradle, had produced a crowd of different sects; the Lutherans, the Carlostadians, the Zwinglians, the Ubiquitarians; he forgot that the very object of the *Christian Institutes*, was to rally the scattered detachments of an army, broken as soon as assembled; he forgot that he himself, differed on important points, that of the Eucharist for example, from Luther, and Zwinglius, and Oecolampadus.

But the necessity of escaping from the contradictions which pressed him, was to lead Calvin to affirmations of a very different bearing. It was with the design of freeing man from man, that Luther had adopted the fatalism of predestination, which referring every thing to the despotism of God, leaves nothing more for human authorities to do. Calvin well perceived that his theory of power was ruined from top to bottom, if he nailed the fatality which weighs down the criminal, to an universal and systematic tolerance. He dared then to maintain, that in the culprit the fault is at once *necessary*, and yet imputable to the will.* Unworthy conclusion which results solely from a connection of laws. Man is not free, and yet he is responsible for his acts; such was the conclusion of the doctrine of Calvin. And why? Because, that by making a perverse use of his freedom, the first man lost in himself all his descendants, except whom it has pleased God to save by an arbitrary decree of his power.†

Thus Calvin admitted a kingdom of elect, and a kingdom of castaways, and between them an abyss which could never be filled up, never passed. Carrying a frightful and bloody logic into his explanation of the doctrine of original sin, he made three parts of the human race the irrevocable portion of Satan, and his eternal prey. Denying free will, without denying hell, he held chastisements full of horror in reserve for crimes which he declared it to be impossible to shun. He damned the very infant among the castaways, even in the womb of its mother. He outraged God by advocating him as unjust, barbarous and all powerful.

Transport this Calvinism from theology to politics, and behold the consequences; the elect are the fortunate of the earth; the castaways are the poor; between them is a fatal abyss, the inequality of conditions; and the divine caprice to which we must submit in adoration, is the accident of birth.

Thus Calvin regarded an aristocracy as the best of all forms of government.‡

And now his life is explained. If in Geneva, become the Rome of protestantism, he established a discipline which Rome never knew; if he made his disciples tremble, and sought to crush his adversaries; if he did not fear to raise his hands, red with the blood of Servet, in triumph towards Heaven; if he wrote on the right to exterminate heretics by the

* "Nego peccatum ideo minus debere imputari, quia necessarium est." Instit. Christ. Relig., lib. ii. cap. 5. p. 164.

† "Ubi queritur cur ita fecerit Dominus, respondendum est, quia voluit." Instit. Christ. Relig., lib. iii. cap. 23. p. 146.

‡ "Minime negaverim aristocratiam vel temperatum ex ipsa et politia statum aliis longe omnibus excellere." Instit. Christ. Relig., lib. iii. cap. 20. p. 552.

sword, a book worthy of the genius of the inquisition;* if Melancthon could not approach him without becoming less tender;† if finally, Theodore Beza praises him for being to the end an implacable‡ monster—who could not see in all this the fruit of a doctrine which sanctified hatred?

Luther had said, "No one has power over the conscience of an elect of the Lord." Calvin said, "The elect of the Lord has power over the castaway." The individualism of Luther led them naturally to a regime of guarantees; it suited a society of working men. The individualism of Calvin was on the contrary combined with ideas of oppression; it suited a military society.

It was in fact by armed feudality, of whose last efforts it availed itself, that Calvinism was introduced in France. France had for some time been agitated by a movement of emancipation analogous to that which was carrying away Germany. By spreading the study of pagan antiquity, by dethroning the Sorbonne in the name of science, and scholasticism for the benefit of literary men, the revival of letters opened the way for the Reformation, which already counted its martyrs in France, and amongst others Louis de Berguin. How was Calvinism about to be received? What were to be the immediate effects of its passage, and its revolutionary influence? How was French burgherism led to adopt the principle of individualism, after having deprived it, both of the religious form which Luther had given it, and the violent character with which Calvin had clothed it? This is what we are about to explain.

Thought had at that period already become so dominant in the world, that it alone could now furnish to parties either a rallying point or an avowable end. Interests could no longer be produced, but as a consequence of ideas. What principle did the Guises represent? What principle was invoked to oppose them? This became the question; we are already far removed from the rude quarrels of the Armagnacs and Burgundians.

Calvin brought to light the principle on which an insurrection of the nobles should naturally lean. Borne away by an equal ardor to resist the throne and oppress the people, the nobility might have sought in vain for a doctrine more in conformity to its tendencies than Calvinism, so suitable to exalt at once the pride which makes rebels, and that which makes tyrants.

It was not only in his capacity of religious despot and organizer, that Calvin condemned revolt. *The Confession of Faith* of the reformed in France contained this article, which is the fortieth and the last.§ We hold that we must obey their laws and statutes—(of the magistrates)—pay taxes and other duties, and bear the yoke of subjection with a good and free will, though they might be infidels, provided, that the Sovereign

* *Fidelis expositio errorum Michaelis Serveti et brevis eorundem refutatio, ubi docetur jure gladii coercendos esse hereticos.* Anno 1554.

† "Melancthon ab eo tempore quo, vel caput reposuit in Calvinismum, vel commercium cum eo habuit, ferocior factus est et asperior in Catholicos." Ulenbergius, *Vita et res gestæ Philippi Melancthonis*, cap. 24. p. 189.

‡ See the discourse of Theodore Beza, *French works of Calvin*, p. 4, et suiv.

§ D'Aubigné *Hist. Univer.*, t. i. lib. ii. chap. 3. p. 64, first edit. 1616.

Empire of God remains entire. On this account we detest those who would reject superior authority, create a community and confusion of goods, and overthrow the order of justice. Illusory declarations! The essence of individualism is to change itself into revolt when subjected to power, to tyranny when it possesses it. Calvinism cannot escape from the consequences of its principle; it broke out in France, in the conspiracy of Amboise.

It is known how the plot was denounced by the Protestants Avencheles and Lignerès; how La Renaudie was killed whilst endeavoring to rally the scattered conspirators; how the enterprise finally failed, and what was the triumph of the Guises. But this triumph, far from stifling the civil war in its cradle, rendered it inevitable, terrible, in consequence of the cruelties of the Cardinal of Lorraine. Blood flowed through the streets of Amboise. The Loire was covered with dead bodies, and the court assisted at the executions as at a festival. This sight, says d'Aubigné,* astonished the king, his brothers, and all the ladies of the court, who beheld it from platforms and the windows of the castle. But this company especially admired Villemongis Briemaut, who, about to die, filled his hands with the blood of his companions, which he cast into the air, then raising them dripping, exclaimed, "Behold, O Great God, the innocent blood of thine own; thou wilt avenge it." The prediction was but too well accomplished. The Calvinists breathed nothing but war from that moment. The atrocity of the recent punishments delighted some of the Catholics, but was a cause of pity to others, and of remorse to a few. The Chancellor Olivier died in consequence of it, and his last moments were those of despair. The Cardinal of Lorraine having come to see him, he said to him in a fury, "Ah Cardinal, it is thou who damnest us;" and as the latter told the dying man to be careful, that it was an evil spirit who was endeavoring to seduce him; "It is well said, replied the chancellor in a bitter tone, it is well met." He then turned away and spoke no more.

The superstitious France of the middle ages was still for a long time to be found in France of the 16th century, so violently urged to the conquest of free examination. In many cities the people believed in certain nocturnal visits, and I know not what mysterious and formidable spirits. Their black monarch at Tours was called Huguet. The Calvinists holding nocturnal meetings sometimes, their enemies, after the conspiracy of Amboise, called them *Huguenots*,† desiring to give them a baptism of ignominy.

They were conquered, they thought them crushed; what had the Guises then to do to complete their victory? To hand Condé over to the executioner. Their audacity did not recoil before striking such a blow, and to cover it, they conveyed the states of the kingdom at Orleans. Condé showed himself to be intrepid, disdainful of his judges, his enemies and his life. He was condemned, but on the 5th of December, 1560, the death of Francis the Second, by saving him, gave a political leader to the followers of Calvin, and a captain to his armed disciples;

* D'Aubigné. Hist. Univer., t. 1. liv. ii. chap. 16. p. 94.

† Brantôme, t. 3. pp. 151, 152.

was Condé suitable for his part? A singular sectary, was a prince, who took delight almost exclusively in blows of the lance, in the smoke of camps, in gay discourse, in easy loves, and "who loved another's wife as well as his own."* Condé was not a man to see anything but the pastime of a knight in the defence of a new religion. What the Calvinists wanted was, a leader full of zeal for their doctrine, and penetrated with its spirit; for I repeat it, it was no longer a question of leading interests or passions to battle, it was a question of leading thither an idea.

A meditative, convinced and taciturn warrior, a sombre warrior, like the god of Calvin, such was the general required by the soldiers whom the breeze from Geneva had struck. Such was the oldest of the Chabillons, the Admiral Coligny. He spoke little and acted prudently, with a tumultuous soul, with bold designs. Deep sadness impaired his smile; the austerity of his manners was not free from rudeness; unsuccessful in his combats, he never attained the renown of Francis of Guise. But it was his particular glory to have made the half of his reputation by his virtue; to have acquired the renown of an illustrious captain only by battles lost; to have been finally the hero of bad fortune. He had neither to receive nor take the right to command; he possessed it naturally, from the confidence he inspired by his carriage, and the gravity of his pride. This was such, that the very mercenaries, so undisciplined, so greedy of the pay of their courage, trembled, when Coligny commanded, of appearing to him to be covetous, and were themselves astonished at their impotence to be insolent beneath his look.

But he was not about to enter on his career, until he had well measured it with his eye. Was he concerned in the conspiracy of Amboise? Tavannes affirms it; Brantome energetically denies it. The latter moreover assures us that the admiral secretly informed Madame de Guise of a plot against her husband.† Why not? Still young, Francis of Guise and Coligny, were united in fraternal friendship; they remembered this up to the day which made them enemies forever.

That day was approaching. Master of the kingdom, under Francis II., the Duke of Guise had not been long in resuming, under Charles IX., his empire for a moment shattered. Only allies had now become necessary for him, he chose them at his will. Knowing that the constable, removed by him from state affairs during a former period, joined the devotion of a nurse to the brutality of an old soldier, and that when he went into battle, he recited paternosters,‡ he brought him back, gained him over, by alarming him lest the mass should be abolished and the altars of the virgin be overthrown. The Marshal Saint André remained—Guise had him for a tool by making him his equal. Thus was born the triumvirate, and it went to work at once. Anthony of Bourbon, King of Navarre, was only formidable from his union with the Huguenots, in drawing him from it, they make a cypher of him. They were assured of the support of Rome and Philip II.; of Italy and Spain; we now reach the formation of the Catholic league. Here commences what is original and truly imposing in the destiny of Francis of Guise. What

* Brantome, t. 3. p. 151, 152.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid., t. 2. p. 67.

had he been until then? A soldier elevated by his valor and success, an ambitious man absolved by his victories, a tamer of cities like so many others, and to crown all, a vulgar great man. But now see him led along, by following the course of things, to a sway which is that of thought served by the sword; behold him become the chief defender of an idea to which the past belongs, and as such, erect upon the borders of the world.

And yet, besides this principle of individualism, for which Coligny was about to arm, besides this principle of authority which Francis of Guise was about to defend, was there nothing more? There was the true principle of fraternity, and the man to whom fell the incomparable honor of representing it, was called Michael de l'Hopital. For Michael de l'Hopital was not, as has been maintained, the precursor of that party of politicians whom the end of our recital will soon lead upon the stage, and who introduced burgherism into state affairs; a party egotistical in its tolerance, humane through scepticism, and which never possessed but the moderation of indifference. No: Michael de l'Hopital had bowels of compassion for the people. His moderation was active, his tolerance was only charity in repose. The calmness of the old man and the serenity of the sage appeared upon his forehead; but in the depths of his heart were a hearth of generous agitations and the flames of youth. He repeated voluntarily, that men were all brethren, and his efforts to prevent religious quarrels had their source in a reflective and profound love for humanity, which unfortunately did not belong to his age, and which does not yet to ours.

Thus the colloquy of Poissy produced none of the results which the great soul of l'Hopital had hoped for. Placed face to face with the cardinals of Lorraine and de Tournon, with Claude d'Espence and Jaques Laincy, the fanatical representatives of the principle of authority, the lieutenants of Calvin, Theodore Beza, and Peter Martyr, only commenced with words, the strife which was to be continued by the sword by Francis of Guise and Coligny. The history of this colloquy is well known; but what most historians have passed by in silence, but which is however worthy of eternal recollection, is the discourse which the chancellor pronounced before Catherine de Medicis, Charles IX., and an assembly entirely a prey to feelings of hatred and plans of murder. "Propose to yourselves a common end. I beseech the learned not to despise those who are their inferiors in science, and the others not to envy those who know more than they, and all of you to lay aside vain disputes. Catholics and protestants, you have been regenerated by the same baptism, you are worshippers of the same Christ, you are brethren!"* Touching exhortation, truly sublime! but it came before the time. Civil war was at the bottom of the doctrines; how would it not have broken out in deeds? Nothing could prevent it, neither the edict of January, an edict of toleration and justice, nor the prudence of the chancellor, nor the policy of Catherine, whom the growing power of the Guises frightened. On the 1st of March, 1562, nearly three hundred protestants were massacred in a barn, by the suite of the Princes of Lorraine, in the small city of Vassy, on a signal

* Fra Paolo. Sarpi. Hist. du Conc. de Trente, liv. v. p. 436.

from the cardinal, priests and ladies applauding, and pointing out with his hand to the soldiers the victims who were endeavoring to escape by the roof*—nothing more was needed. France was on fire.

To judge by the recital of d'Aubigné, in his *Histoire Universelle*, it must have been a terrible night which gave a religious chief to revolted protestantism. Coligny was sleeping tranquilly when sobs were suddenly heard by his side. He awoke alarmed; it was his wife lamenting the fate of the Calvinists, given up to the knives of the catholics. The discourse of Charlotte de Laval to Coligny had in it something mournful, but irresistible. Did he not then hear the cries of his murdered co-religionists? Was there nothing could move his soul in this cause of God, in this cause of his brethren? "This bed is a tomb for me," she said, "since they have not a tomb. These sheets reproach me, that they have not been buried." Coligny listened, half conquered, with his soul oppressed; he objected, however, the misfortunes of the kingdom, a prey to the shock of the Spaniards and the English, the probable defeats, the opprobrium, the calumny added to defeat, the flight perhaps to a foreign country, hunger, nakedness. Might he not perish by the hand of the executioner, or beneath the dagger of an assassin? And she abandoned, proscribed, might she not one day be reduced to see her children become the servants of their enemies? "To weigh down such a determination," said he, finishing, "I give you three weeks." But how can the heart of a woman when it escapes in violence of piety or love be repressed? "These three weeks have gone by," impetuously exclaimed Charlotte de Laval. "In the name of God, I summon you not to defraud us, or I will be a witness against you at his judgment." On the next day Coligny took his sword; he only quitted it to die.

In complaining to the King of Navarre, of the massacre of Vassy, Theodore Beza said to that prince, "Sire, it is for truth, for the church of God, in the name of which I speak, to endure blows and not to give them; but you will also be pleased to remember that it is an anvil which has worn out many hammers."† Bossuet‡ well observes that this remark, so much lauded, is illusory, since contrary to nature, the anvil is set to striking, and that tired of receiving blows it gives them in its turn. In order to understand how there could be such a duel between the old and new principle we need only compare the ferocious maxims of the *Christian Institutes* with the catechism of the inquisition, and to remember that over one of these two camps hovered the genius of Philip II., and over the other that of Calvin.

Thus commenced these wars.—Read their annals, if you can, from beginning to end, and you will find in them nothing of those transports, that chivalric generosity, that inexhaustible fund of gaiety, which, until now, the French had always carried into battle. Almost all the warriors to whom the reign of the Valois introduces us, have a something of the courage of the bravo and the sinister serenity of the executioner. The hero produced by the catholicism of the Cardinal of Lorraine and Philip

* D'Aubigné. Hist. Univer., liv. iii. chap. 1. p. 130.

† Journal de l'Estoile, t. 1. p. 55. Collé, Petitot.

‡ Brantome, t. 2. p. 244.

II., is Montluc, who placed his paternal solicitude* in bringing up his children to carnage, and who loved to indicate his route by human shreds fastened to branches of trees. The hero produced by Genevese protestantism is that Baron of Adrets, who under the pretence that he did *not know how to war respectfully and to carry his hand to his hat and his sword at the same time*,† wished to change the Lyonnese, Forey, Auvergne, Dauphiny, Languedoc, into one vast cemetery, and "who was feared more than the tempest which ravages great fields of corn,"‡ Francis of Guise himself, though naturally magnanimous, appeared to have forgotten the *courtesy of Metz*; and he did not exercise towards the French of Coligny the feeling he had shown towards the Spaniards of Charles V. Condé alone represented the old nobility of France in the strife; but remark that Condé was a Huguenot only in name. Intoxicated with courage, ambition, and love, he gave himself but little trouble to know if it were true, that God had divided the world between the elect and the castaways, and he was not consequently led to judge as lawful, to proclaim as holy, the extermination of the castaways by the elect.

If one doubts the influence of Calvinism over the morals of this period, and the ravages which this influence exercised even among the Catholics, he has only to think over the following: The principle of Calvinism, we have said, was individualism combined with ideas of oppression. Now, what was the distinctive, characteristic trait of these religious wars among a people, so loyal, so chivalric, so humane as the French? It was—assassination, assassination which is the most odious, but most logical and direct manifestation of the individual sentiment, excessively exalted and perverted.

The end of Francis of Guise is well known; and it is not without reason that Bossuet has used the crime of Poltrot as, a weapon against the Calvinists.§ It is certain that Poltrot went about announcing the blow he meditated before striking it; and no one among his party dissuaded him from his design.

How can we refuse to recognize in such phrenzy the effect of a doctrine which had dared to place religion in hatred? How can we not find in it that kind of conviction which animated Renée of France when she wrote to Calvin: "I have not forgotten, that you wrote to me that David hated the enemies of God with mortal hatred, nor do I intend to contravene it, nor to derogate anything from it; for should I know that the king my father, and the queen my mother, and my husband and children were rejected of God, I would hate them with mortal hatred, and desire hell for them." Behold what disciples Calvin made among the women; should we be astonished if he found terrible ones among soldiers? Calvinism had besides placed the Bible in the hands of every one, and thus spread out, lending to it a divine character, that mixture of religion and barbarism, which distinguishes the history of the Jewish people.

Let us hasten to say that the contagion communicated itself very

* Brantome, t. 2. p. 244.

† Brantome, t. 2. p. 245.

‡ D'Aubigné Hist. Univer., liv. 3. chap. 9. p. 155.

§ Chap. 10. Histoire des Variations.

quickly to the Catholics. The morals which Catherine de Medicis had brought from Italy but too well disposed them to submit, in this connection, to the influence of protestanism. Too ardent, the thirst for pleasure ended by compounding itself with a thirst for blood, and cruelty is one of the symptoms of excessive depravity in love. The court of France offered, under the reign of the Valois, an example as strange as tragical. The women whom Catherine kept about her to derive advantage from the power of their beauty, only yielded to homicidal loves. Plans of murder were unceasingly mingled around the throne with those of passionate gallantry. If one went into the lower saloons of the Louvre to practice how to inflict a blow with his dagger skilfully, it was after nameless refinements of debauchery, it was on leaving an atmosphere entirely impregnated by the enervating cosmetics of Florence. Gentlemen wrote to their mistresses in the blood either of their rivals or of themselves. Perfumers and bravos were the fashion. Assassination prevailed then among all parties. It became a means of renown; some excelled in it. Among the most famous was Thomas, nicknamed the *Gold-Wire Drawer*;* he usually ate with his hands red with his murders, boasting that he mixed with his food the blood he shed treacherously. To assassinate became even the work of the king. The Guises, after the conspiracy of Amboise, had advised Francis the Second to fix on a fine day to play with Condé and to give him his dagger in his bosom. Francis dared not, and was accused of cowardice.† This cowardice did not, however, belong to Charles the Ninth. Learning one night that La Mole, whose death he had sworn, was at the Louvre, he took with him six gentlemen, telling them to strangle with cords, which he handed to them, the person he should point out. Carrying himself a lighted candle in his hand, he posted his accomplices on the path that La Mole must take to get to the residence of the Duke of Allençon. But La Mole, determining to go first to the Queen of Navarre, his mistress, love saved him.‡

Thus assassination was everywhere at that period, even in battles. At Dreux the Marshal of Saint André fell beneath the blows of Baigni, who dogged him through the fight, and had a personal injury to avenge.§ At St. Denis, the constable is overthrown by a blow from a pistol, when wounded in the face and unable to resist, he had been abandoned by his followers.|| At Jarnac, Condé himself died assassinated.¶ He had surrendered, when he was perceived by the soldiers of the company of the Duke of Anjou. Seeing them coming from a distance, he turned towards him who had received his sword, and said to him, "I am a dead man. D'Argens, thou wilt not save me." Then covering his face with his cloak, like another Julius Cæsar, he awaited them. He knew well his time. Montesquiou went straight to him and killed him.

Such then was the influence of Calvinism, even over the Catholic no-

* Journal de l'Estoile, t. 1. p. 76.

† Theodore Beza. Hist. Eccles., t. 1. liv. 3. p. 270.

‡ Journal de l'Estoile, t. 1. p. 82.

§ D'Aubigné Hist. Univer., t. 1. liv. 3., chap. 15, p. 169.

¶ Journal de l'Estoile, t. 1. p. 65.

bility, condemned to submit to it whilst combating it, that each of them made himself individually a judge in his own cause, and what is more, the executioner of his own sentence; the logical result of this doctrine full of bitterness, which prohibited to men the indifference of repose, the calm of egotism, and commanded to them, in the name of God, activity in hatred.

There were consequently two reasons why Calvinism should pass away quickly in France; first, its nature, essentially anti-social, and then its alliance with the military feudality, already on the wane.

Thus, the lassitude of the Huguenots became evident after the battles of Jarnac and Moncontour. Doubly fatigued, by their own excesses and those of their enemies, they aspired only after peace. It was offered them on the 15th of August, 1570, and they immediately laid down their arms. Catherine de Medicis called them to Paris with soft words and promises, and they ran in crowds into the snare which was spread for them. It is true, that the last peace was extremely advantageous to them; it assured to them liberty of conscience; it abolished the edicts which had deprived them of their employments; churches were left for them in Paris and at court; the cities of Rochelle, Montauban, Cognac and La Charité, were abandoned to them. for two years, etc. But were not such conditions too favorable not to be suspicious? And after so many treaties of peace broken, so many violations of sworn faith, always followed by murders, were the Huguenots permitted to hand themselves over unreservedly to Catherine and her dark counsellors? Their impatience to finish it, is, notwithstanding, so great, that they press towards the death which was preparing for them. Coligny himself, now well convinced of the exhaustion of Calvinism, lets his accustomed prudence go to sleep. It is in vain, that he is warned of his danger from all quarters. "It were better, replied he, to die at once by a brave blow, than to live an hundred years in fear."* And having reached Paris, what was his great care? To make war on the Spaniards in the low countries, in order to turn aside civil war forever.

Such was the state of Calvinism in France, when on the 24th of August, 1572, the bell of the palace gave the signal for the general massacre of the Huguenots in the capital. From whatever point of view it may be examined, of all the atrocities remaining in the memory of man, the Saint Bartholomew was at once the most execrable and the most useless.

Calvinism was languishing; the Saint Bartholomew revived it; it breathed into it a rage, which for a time took the place of power. The massacres were answered by insurrections; many cities were inflamed, whose religious passions appeared extinguished; the Huguenots displayed in many provinces as much ardor to avenge Coligny, as they had shown in following him; and the horrors committed in the *matins of Paris* gave birth to the constancy of the besieged of Rochelle, their prodigies, their unconquered heroism.

Moreover, Catherine de Medicis had no social result in view in planning the Saint Bartholomew; for this woman, who passes for having been

* Brantome, t. 3. p. 185.

† Ibid. p. 168.

endowed with genius, because her whole life was a successful crime, never tended by great means, but to small things, to strengthen her power at court, to rid herself of some personal disquietude, to sap oppressive pretensions. After the conspiracy of Amboise, taking umbrage at the triumvirate, she urged on the Protestants to revolt, "very easy, that in the noise and rumor of arms, she was in safety."* Afterwards, the ascendancy of Coligny alarmed her, and she concealed an assassination in a massacre. Willingly, in her ambitious and sterile fury, would she have set the kingdom on fire, only to reign with less care in the midst of its ashes. What mattered religion to her? Brantome, her panegyrist, delights in representing her as "receiving the sacrament at Easter, and not failing daily at divine service, vespers and masses."† Her true, her sincere devotion consisted in obeying astrologers, in calculating the number of days reserved for her enemies or her lovers, or the swingings of a ring suspended by a hair. She introduced a thousand practices at once puerile and dismal into France, the taste for incantations, the custom of tracing magic circles. When Lachole was interrogated as to the pretended plot which cost him his head, they were much disturbed about a certain image of wax which belonged to him, and which was found having a blow on the heart. Summoned to declare if this figure had reference to the sickness of the king, he swore no, and that the said image "was to cause his mistress to love him."‡ Such was the kind of Catholicism made fashionable by Catherine! The terrors of superstition weighed upon that soul which remorse could not invade. On the day on which the Cardinal of Lorraine, whom hating, she had received into her bed, died, the queen was suddenly seized with alarm. Being at table, she trembled violently, and exclaimed, "Jesus, I see the Cardinal of Lorraine!"§ This apparition pursued her long after, and for more than a month, she could not remain alone.

If it is difficult not to curse Charles the Ninth, it is also difficult not to mourn over him. Frank, of a joyous disposition, and full of mildness, he was to become ferocious and sombre from the atmosphere, so laden with crimes, which he breathed. Irritable, weak, his organization was incapable of resisting the impressions which assailed him. The smell of blood mounted to his head, and his cruelty was always that of drunkenness. He, who at the Saint Bartholomew, fired upon his Huguenot subjects, held in horror the heroes of this carnage, and their prowess as assassins. It had fallen to him to give the signal for the tragedy; when it began he played his part in it frenziedly, and when it was over, he preserved such a remembrance of it, that his nights were filled with spectres, and he never smiled afterwards.

His death, which took place on the 30th of May, 1594, left the throne to a prince, who degraded royalty so low, that when it was judged necessary to save the principle of authority attacked in Catholicism, by a final effort, the royal power was judged unworthy of it; they had recourse to the democracy.

* Brantome. *Vie des dames illustres*, p. 63. † *Ibid.* p. 87.

‡ *Memoires de l'Etat de France sous Charles Neuvieme*, t. 3. p. 196; B, 1693.

§ *Journal de l'Etoile*, t. 1. p. 109.

What were the principal circumstances, the sense, the character, the bearing, the results of this last effort of the principle of authority, of that strange strife which will show us Catholicism allied to popular passions, and which, in history, is called the LEAGUE? This cannot be clearly pointed out, without leaving for a moment the world of facts to mount into that of ideas.

Individualism appeared in France, under three different aspects, in the sixteenth century; religion, politics, and philosophy. We have followed it under its religious form, making itself accepted by an armed nobility, seeking to gain battles and take towns by assault, drawing itself along in the train of revolts, pushing on to murder; a material propagandism only raised up by the sword. We are now about to study it, transformed in a sensible manner, separating itself from warriors, to go among the followers of industrial pursuits, and the peaceful friends of letters, passing from religion to politics and philosophy, from the midst of camps to books.

CHAPTER IV.

INDIVIDUALISM IN POLITICS.

PROTESTANT PUBLICISTS.

Elaboration by the French Publicists and the Protestants of the Sixteenth Century, of the doctrines, from which sprung the Burgher Revolution of 1789—The incomplete side of these doctrines is individualism; their noble side, toleration—Appeal of La Boëtius to the principle of fraternity.

AFTER the wars of religion and the Saint Bartholomew, the religious idea found itself compromised on both sides by such excesses, consolidated by so many horrors, that minds, by an irresistible movement turned themselves elsewhere. A party was formed, composed at first of some discontented and mischief-making lords, but to which its name alone, the *Party of the Politicians*, promised high destinies. Men were tired of the abuses of force; thought claimed a right to be present; and what is remarkable, is, that in the numerous writings of the times, most of them hatched by the breath of Calvinism, religious affairs occupy but little space, whilst political occupy a very large part.

But to what principle, to what doctrine do the politics of the thinkers of that day, that of contemporary books, refer? Let us examine.

Let us open the second and third volumes of the *Memoires de l'Estat de France*, in which are collected the political treatises, born in our country, of the influence of the Reformation; see on what maxims our glance falls.

“We should not obey the magistrates when they command irreligious or iniquitous things, and by iniquitous we mean those to which one cannot submit, without violating his vocation, be it public or pri-

vate.”* “The shepherd is made for the flock, not the flock for the shepherd.”† “When does the protector of the people begin to become their tyrant? Is it not when he begins to do that which happened, it is said, near the temple of Jupiter in Arcadia, where whosoever tasted human entrails mixed with those of animals became of necessity a wolf?”‡ Instead of excommunicating tyrannicides, statues should be erected to them in the temples.§ “What is the best brass out of which to make a statue?” asked a tyrant of Diogenes, the Cynic; “that,” he replied, which was used for the statues of Armodius and Aristogiton,” etc.

This hatred of absolute power breaks out both in the *Franco-Gallia*, of Hotman, and in the *vindiciæ contra tyrannos* of Hubert Languet. “Have we a word more expressive than that of tyrant, to designate those who oppress holy liberty?”|| “No one is born a king, no one is a king of himself, no one can reign without the people,”¶ etc., etc.

Here then are absolute power questioned and the right of resistance proclaimed. But shall this right be exercised by the first comer at his caprice? The Protestant publicists of the sixteenth century, who all belong to the same school, and whose works we might think written by the same hand, made the following distinction in regard to this. They admitted that those only could inflict justice on bad princes who were commissioned to impose a rein on them, if it was under an already established government; but if it was under an usurped rule, then any one was permitted to fall upon a tyrant.** They went still further, and laid down as a principle, that against a prince, usurper or not, the right of armed resistance belonged to every private individual, *having an extraordinary vocation from God*,†† an exception which proved the rule, an individual having no other judge of his vocation but himself.

But apart from this theory of rights, there is nothing which treats upon the theory of duties; no trace of ideas of association; not an appeal to a sentiment of human fraternity; not a truly democratic aspiration. The Protestant publicists of the sixteenth century do not speak of the people, but in tones of distrust or contempt. This one calls them a wild beast, *beluam*; that one congratulates England on having taken precautions against popular interference in public affairs, the part of the multitude being *nilhil sapere*;‡‡ a third exclaims, “We must consider that the multitude, if it presumes it should control the sovereign when it pleases, will never content itself with modest requests, but will use that insolence peculiar to ignorant persons.”§§

* Du droit des Magistrats sur leurs Sujets, t. 2. p. 383, 384. Des Memoires de l'Etat de France, 1573. † Ibid. p. 487.

‡ Apothegmes et discours notables recueillis de divers auteurs contre la tyrannie et les tyrans, t. 2. p. 522. Des Memoires de l'Etat de France. § Ibid. 525.

|| “Quanquam quid eos tyrannos appellemus, ac non etiam atrociores vocabulo utamur?” Franc. Hotomani Franco-Gallia. Ex officina Johannis Bertulphi, 1576.

¶ “Quum nemo rex nascatur, nemo per se rex esse, nemo absque populo regnare possit.” Vindiciæ contra tyrannos, p. 112. Edit. of 1660.

** Du droit des Magistrats sur leurs Sujets, t. 2. pp. 491, 492, 496, of the Memoires de l'Etat de France. Vindiciæ contra tyrannos, p. 295.

†† Du droit des Magistrats sur leurs Sujets, t. 2. p. 494.

‡‡ Hotomani juris consulti Franco-Gallia, p. 122.

§§ Discours politiques des diverses puissances etablies de Dieu au monde, du gouvernement legitime d'icelles et du devoir de ceux qui y sont assuejtis, t. 3. p. 203, des memoires de l'Etat de France.

The sovereign people are, by these writers, absorbed entirely in a privileged minority, which Hubert Lambert calls the ordinary chambers, *camera ordinaria*, and which the others designate by the name of the *Estates*. When in the *Franco-Gallia*, Hotman recalls with so much complacency, that our ancient kings were chosen by the people, that they raised them on a buckler and carried them thus three times around the assembly;* when, with such a lively solicitude, he seeks in our annals the proof of the right we had to depose bad princes; when he represents Childeric driven from his kingdom for having plunged into debauchery and ravished and dishonored the daughters of his subjects;† when he finally exclaims, "If an unlimited power were left to kings, they would soon treat not only their subjects, but also their near relatives as slaves and flocks;"‡ do not think that Hotman intended to deduce from this the legitimacy of universal suffrage; certainly not, what he wanted was the sovereignty of the estates. "The estates are above kings," says the author of the treatise entitled, "*Du droit des Magistrats sur leurs Sujets*,"§ and he adds, "When tyranny prevents the meeting of the estates, the healthiest part may, without waiting for a general meeting, bring the other to reason."||

The sovereignty of the estates once recognized, the Protestant publicists of the sixteenth century agree in preferring a monarchy. In the *Dialogue of Archo and Politeus*, Archo asking which is of all governments the most desirable, Politeus replies, "There is none so praiseworthy as a monarchy."¶ Archo pursues the subject and desires to know which is best, an elective or an hereditary empire. Politeus pronounces in favor of hereditary monarchies, reserving the right to the estates of changing the dynasty, in order that "when the king declines from the duty of his office, the people may then let him know, that there is a difference between the possession of a domain and a post and office of government." Follow the chain of these ideas through modern history and you will arrive at 1588 and at 1830.

A monarchy then, but a temperate, representative monarchy, submissive to the control of the chambers and springing out of their sovereignty is the political idea of the thinkers, who, in France in the sixteenth century, took up their pens under the double influence of the Saint Bartholomew and of Protestantism. Princes should be what Pomponius Lætus said, "the prince is a speaking law and the law a mute prince."††—"a sway composed of royalty is to be praised as the best and most sufficient—and any other kind of civil administration is unfortunate and useless for the constitution of a political state."‡‡

Thus we have resistance to authority by virtue of the idea of *right*,

* "Qui populi suffragiis delectus fuerat, hunc scuto impositum sub levebant, humeris que." Hotomani *Franco-Gallia*, p. 76.

† "Childericus—cepit filias eorum stuprosque detrahers." Ibid. p. 77.

‡ "Non modo cives suos, sed etiam consanguineos quo vel mancipia vel pecudes haberent." Hotomani *Franco-Gallia*, p. 121.

§ *Memoires de l'Estat de France*, t. 3. p. 511.

|| Ibid. p. 513.

¶ *Dialogue of Archo and Politeus*, p. 70.

†† Ibid. p. 80.

‡‡ *Discours politiques des diverses puissances, etc.*, p. 225. Digitized by Google

not of *duty*: a hatred for absolute power, but also an entire separation from the people; an effort towards the establishment of a regime with guarantees; privileges in favor of the *healthy part* of the nation; devotion to monarchy, regarded however as an instrument and no longer as a principle—these show us, in its good and evil, individualism passing from religion to politics. It is already a progress, a notable progress; but how great yet is the distance to be travelled before reaching the triumph of truth, of justice.

We can now see from what period the invasion of constitutional doctrines dates in France. Singular thing, since 1574 the precursors of the Montesquieus and the Benjamin Constant have had their eyes fixed on England, and have dragged themselves with servile complacency in their train. Hotman cites the English constitution with admiration. The author of *Du droit des Magistrats sur leurs Sujets*, proclaims the kingdom of England "to be the most fortunate in the world," and it is upon this good fortune of the English that he relies in order to vaunt the benefits of "moderate royal power." There was not yet that anxious love of order, so strongly rooted in the hearts of modern burgherism, among the Protestant publicists of the sixteenth century, so as not to mix itself up with maledictions against tyrants. "ARCHO: Do you not think that changes in a state are to be much feared? POLITEUS: They are; for such a machine is not moved but with much danger and hazard."*

Doubtless the ideas which we have here presented had not waited for the sixteenth century to make their appearance in France. But scattered through books little known, they had never borne testimony but to the initiative of some isolated writers, when Protestantism came to give them life and power. It was not in fact until the last half of the sixteenth century that they took a form, united in a system, pretended to empire, and in a word became the programme of a party.

The time was come for the principle of authority to be disturbed, to defend itself. Jean Bodin descended into the arena, and in 1577, the *six books of the Republic* appeared. Let none be deceived by this word *Republic*. Bodin soon defines it, "The right of government of many households and of that which is common to them, with the sovereign power."† According to him the sovereign power, whose essential characteristics are, that it is perpetual and absolute, cannot be better placed than in the hands of one individual. The theory of despotism never displayed itself with so much insolence, as in the *Republic* of Bodin. Not only did he make the monarch the absolute master of his people, but he maintained that a sovereign prince could not place, of himself and beforehand, a rein upon his power. "Thus we see at the end of edicts and ordinances these words, '*for such is our pleasure*,' in order to inform us that the laws of the sovereign prince, though they might have been founded on good and sufficient reasons, depended nevertheless on his pure and free will."‡

This book of Bodin's is usually regarded as a dogmatical treatise; it

* Dialogue d'Archo et Politens, p. 97.

† Les six livres de la République de Jean Bodin, liv. 1. chap. 1. p. 10.

‡ Ibid. liv. 1. chap. 8. p. 92.

is rather the work of a polemic, and in certain passages of a violent polemic. He pursues his design by opposing strongly those "who have written on the duties of magistrates and other such books."* Bodin cannot understand how any one has dared to place the estates above the king; "a thing which might lead true subjects to revolt, from the obedience which they owe their sovereign prince."† The example of England embarrasses and troubles him, and he denies what the Protestant publicists affirm about it. He assures his readers that he has it from M. Dail, the ambassador of England, that among our neighbors across the channel "the king receives or refuses the law as seems good to him, and does not allow it to become an ordinance but at his pleasure," and this which M. Dail has told him is enough. Hotman had cited enthusiastically these words of the justiciary of Arragon to the king when he was chosen, "We who are of more avail than you, and of more power than you, we create you king."‡ Bodin only sees in this a formality, from whence no conclusion is to be drawn against the hereditary right of the Arragonese princes to the crown,§—a right, the reality of which he goes on to prove historically. Aristotle had said, and the Protestant publicists had repeated, that a king became a tyrant as soon as he commanded anything contrary to the wishes of his people. Bodin declares such an assertion destitute of foundation, and "even pernicious," for by this "the king would be only a mere magistrate."||

Like the protestant publicists, Bodin advocates a monarchy; but he wishes the sovereignty to be absolute, free from every aristocratic and popular mixture. What folly to imagine that one can "frame a republic made up of three orders."¶ Society must then be exposed to the shock of a thousand contradictory laws, some tending to sustain the monarchy, others marked with the impress of popular passions. In such a struggle, what would become of the sovereignty? Whence would be drawn the governing force, which the principle of unity would no longer furnish? Of the three elements placed in collision, would it not end in one succeeding, and in succeeding at the risk, by the means, in the disorder of a revolution? Here Bodin presses his adversaries with rare vigor; he has found their vulnerable point, and all this part of his book is written with the superiority and eloquence of good sense. But drawn on by the conception which weighs upon him, he is not long in falling from this height, and we must smile, when replying to those who in France salute the image of aristocracy in the parliament, the democracy in the States-General, and the monarchy in the king, he thinks to crush them by this single phrase, "it is a crime of lese majesty to make subjects the companions of a sovereign prince."**

That Bodin should have turned aside with horror at the sight of the odious ideal of Machiavel; that he also should have exclaimed, anathema on tyrants;†† that after having surrendered to a single person a devouring sovereignty, he should have admitted as restrictions on this sovereignty the respect of plighted faith, and the submission due to the laws of God

* Bodin, liv. 1. chap. 8. p. 96.

§ Bodin, liv. 1. chap. 8. p. 90.

¶ Ibid. liv. 2. chap. 1. p. 186.

† Ibid. ‡ Hotomani Franco-Gallia, p. 123.

|| Ibid. liv. 2. chap. 3. p. 196.

** Ibid. p. 183.

†† Ibid. liv. 2. chap. 5.

and nature,* what matters all this, if the edifice reared by him on morals, is to be cast down by him in politics; if he covers up in the sovereign prince with systematic impunity this violation of the natural and divine laws which he condemns? now, what is his opinion on this point? If any one of his own authority makes himself a sovereign prince, he is an usurper, a tyrant; that he may be proceeded against by due course of justice or by violence, even to death, this Bodin does not contradict; but in the case of a prince already established, legitimate, he says, "in this case it does not pertain to one private subject, nor to all combined, to attack the honor nor the life of the monarch, either by violence or due course of justice, though he should have committed all the crimes, impieties, and cruelties that may be enumerated."†

Thus did the principle of individualism and the principle of authority encounter each other in the domain of thought in the sixteenth century.

By whom was the principle of fraternity represented, defended? by Stephen de la Boëtius.

It is wrong to range Boëtius among the protestant publicists of the sixteenth century. By the style alone it is easy to discover wherein, *le discours de la servitude volontaire*, (the discourse on voluntary servitude,) disengages itself from so many treatises whose erudition is drawn from the Old Testament, and where the Bible is met, felt, and breathed at every page. It appeared, however, printed in the *Memoires de l'Etat de France*, and the first edition was even published at the end of the *Franco-Gallia*. Why? Because between la Boëtius and the protestant authors of the day there was this in common, that they were endeavoring to sap the basis of absolute power. But what a difference in all that concerned the point of departure, the end to be attained, the sentiments, the doctrines. If Boëtius had only reproached the people for their disposition "to enslave themselves, to cut each other's throats,"‡ for suffering "extortions, lecheries, cruelties, not from an army, not from a barbarous camp, but from a single man; not from a Hercules or a Samson, but from an individual who was frequently the most cowardly and feminine in the nation. If, pointing with his finger to the tyrant in action, he had only exclaimed to the victims, "whence has he so many eyes, how is he such a spy upon you, if you do not give them to him? How has he so many hands to strike you, if he does not use your own?§ Yes, even then the name of Boëtius would merit a glorious place in the memory, in the gratitude of men; and it should be honored as equal with the best, for having avenged human dignity in language which imparts the movement of Caius Gracchus to the force of Tacitus. But Boëtius has acquired immortality by other titles until now too much despised. The page of his discourse least cited and the most worthy of being so, is the following.

"If there is any thing clear and apparent in nature and about which

* Bodin, liv. 1. chap. 8. p. 92. † Ibid. liv. 2. chap. 5. p. 210.

‡ *Discours de la Servitude Volontaire*, t. 2. p. 109, des *Memoires de l'Etat de France*.

§ Ibid. t. 2. p. 118.

we are not permitted to be blind, it is, that Nature, the minister of God and the governess of men, has made us all of the same form and as it were in the same mould, so that we should all recognize each other as companions, or rather as brethren. And if dividing the presents it has made us, it has given advantages of body or mind to some over others, it has not, however, placed us in this world as in an enclosed camp, and has not sent the strongest and best informed into it as armed brigands into a forest to swallow up the weak. But we should rather believe that by thus giving to some greater parts and to others smaller, it wished to give a place for fraternal affection, some having power to give assistance, others having need of receiving it. We cannot doubt that are all *free*, since we are all companions; and it cannot enter the brains of any one, that nature has placed any one in servitude, having placed us all in companionship."^{*}

Who, reading such lines, and on thinking at what period they were written, would not feel penetrated with admiration and touched to the bottom of his heart? Thus this doctrine of Christ which submits the *power* of some to the *wants* of others, which draws the greatest aptitudes from the greatest duties and not from the greatest rights; this doctrine, which seeks in fraternity alone the proof, condition, foundation of liberty, and which proclaims us free *BECAUSE we are companions*; this doctrine, so simple, but at the same time so elevated, which, even now, after so many intellectual efforts and revolutions, is still banished among the reveries of good men, Boëtius professed in the sixteenth century with all the authority of virtue and genius. But the hour had not yet come; there could only then be serious contests between individualism and authority.

We are about to assist at this combat in the region of ideas; before showing how it was continued in that of facts, let us tell how the cause of individualism was served in the sixteenth century by philosophy. We shall have then described, under its triple aspect, the invasion of the new principle, to which French society was definitely to belong, after a lapse of two centuries.

* Discours de la Servitude Volontaire, t. 2. p. 121, 122, des Memoires de l'Etat de France.

CHAPTER V.

INDIVIDUALISM IN PHILOSOPHY.

MONTAIGNE.

Montaigne wishes every one to live for himself—He endeavors to establish the impossibility of all social rule—He studies to prove that the commerce of men is but a frightful and eternal war—He shows the folly of all social institutions—He maintains that man is no more made for social life than animals are—The Epopee of individualism.

Ia Boëtius and Montaigne were friends, and so intimate that their friendship has remained celebrated; is it not strange? For what was Montaigne? The apostle of indulgent egotism. Self-study—self-knowledge, self-contemplation, self-mastery, self-sufficiency; this according to Montaigne is supreme wisdom, the end of human life. And unfortunately he wrote a book in proof of it, which is the glory of the human mind.

Do not tell him that we are not born for ourselves, but for others; “a fine phrase, he replies, in which ambition and avarice hide themselves.”* To act for another, what folly! Whilst furious and intrepid you mount the breach, encountering hostile fires, running on death, in what do you think he is engaged, for whom you are going to die? Enjoying life and love. You leave a study after midnight, pale, covered with dust, broken down with fatigue; what have you gone there to do? To learn to be happy and wise? By no means; but that posterity may know the true orthography of a Latin word, or the measure of a verse of Plautus; unhappy man! Why not rather withdraw within yourself, in order to belong to yourself? Leave the future which does not concern you; loose yourself from the society to which you have nothing to bring; shun every thing that removes you from yourself; live for yourself; that is alone to live. Thus speaks Montaigne; and in order that in the solitude into which he calls him, man may not have to seek elsewhere than in himself for sources of happiness, he counsels him to fly the slavery of deep affections and of domestic cares, “for the government of a family is no less a torment, than that of a whole state.” He does not interdict wise men from having a wife and children, provided, “they do not so attach themselves to them, that their time is dependent on them.” Listen to him. “We should have a rear-shop, all our own, all free—in it we should pursue our ordinary life, of ourselves with ourselves, and so privately that no conversation or communication about external affairs should be permitted in it; we should discourse and laugh there as if without a wife, children, property, followers and servants, so that when the occasion of their loss shall come, it will not be a novelty for us to undergo it.”†

This is not however enough; once in isolation, we should not permit ourselves to be pursued there, if we believe in Montaigne, by the images or rumors of the world, and we should do as the animals who efface their tracks at the entrance of their den.

Is there an invariable and sure rule for the establishment of social intercourse? Montaigne seeks for it, but does not find it. That which is the safety of one people, causes the ruin of another. Zeno buys his fellow citizens, by offering them as a holocaust to the anger of the conqueror; the host of Sylla, which does the same, derives from it no advantage for themselves nor anybody. Interrogate now, the past of human societies, pry into their future; Montaigne by a phrase foils your researches and renders hopeless your beliefs, "the same end is reached by different means."* What part are we then to take? What route to choose in the labyrinth of history? Upon what to rely in the art of governing men?

But if instead of considering the rule of social connections, you study their nature, you must still fly into retreat. The commerce of man is but a war, an incessant war, a war to the knife. The shop-keeper only gains by the foolish extravagances of youth, and the architect but by the fall of houses. Here is a physician who will live by your death, and a priest for whose repast your interment will pay. "The profit of one is the damage of the other."† Oh! Montaigne, Montaigne, have you not taken accident, chance, for law? Why did you not consult on this chapter your noble friend, Stephen de la Boëtius? He would doubtless have pointed out to you, that that which appears to you to be the natural and necessary existence of societies, is but their laborious infancy. Antagonism of interests is the vice, the misfortune of imperfect societies. But a day will come when each one being no longer but a public and free agent of a vast association founded on the harmony of efforts and the agreement of desires, the remuneration of the advocate will cease to depend on the number of his suits, and that of the physician on the quantity of sickness.

Montaigne goes on, passing in review the customs of different people, and triumphs in all the imbecility, barbarism and dissoluteness that he sees. Here, the subjects speak to their king only by proxy, and when the master expectorates, the best loved of his wives holds out her hand; there they feed on quivering flesh, they slay their parents when they become old, and the son makes his own body the grave of the paternal corpse. Go where you will, North, South, East or West, Montaigne will show you morality changing its mask upon the road, at almost every frontier, and social conventions concealing everywhere, from the eyes of the deceived people, the yoke which degrades or oppresses them. Savages come to France and are asked what they find remarkable there, and they reply that two things astonish them; the first, that strong men with beards consent to obey a child, and second, that men plunge with impunity into all kinds of excesses by the side of their fellows who are dying of hunger, and Montaigne exclaims, "That is not bad, but what matters it, they do not wear high shoes."‡ Bitter dart, which the philosopher

* *Essais de Montaigne*, liv. 1. chap. 1.

† *Ibid.* liv. 1. chap. 21.

‡ *Ibid.* liv. 1. chap. 30. p. 123.

lances, in passing, at the civilization whose wisdom is vaunted. Yet, if to change were a remedy, if the sick man by turning on his couch, could alleviate his sickness; but Montaigne denies it. When the social law is bad, we suffer by submitting to it, we suffer more by destroying it. "Those who disturb a state are absorbed in its ruin. The advantage of the trouble never falls to him who has caused it; he beats and disturbs the water for other fishermen."* What is to be done then? Montaigne tells you what to do. "*Cut loose from society*, you and a companion are enough for each other, or you for yourself."† Efface the tracks at the entrance of your den.

These are not the mere words of a philosopher to a philosopher. Montaigne addresses himself to all, and it is upon the very idea of society that the attack is made. It is necessary to establish that man is not made for the social state; that he possesses from his birth the means of self-sufficiency; that if it is given to him to add acquired faculties to his natural ones, he has it in common with many animals; and that finally, the empire into which he should pass, in common with the rest of creation, is the empire of nature; Montaigne is ready, and his condition will not leave an argument without a reply. To prove that the skin of man can bear exposure to the air, he will cite the example of the Irish, half naked under a cold sky, and that of our ancestors who went with their stomachs uncovered, and that "of our ladies, who, soft and delicate as they are, frequently go uncovered to the navel."‡ He will compare the warrior clothed in armor with the ichneumon going to fight the crocodile under a cuirass of kneaded clay. We have language to communicate with our fellows. A fine reason. Do not animals know how to use their voice in complaining, rejoicing, calling to each other for aid, and loving? Do not the animals who serve us understand the different shades of our commands? Like the language of people differing in different countries, does not the cry of the partridge vary according to the situation of places? No, no; man is not an exception in an immensity, which envelops, swallows up and carries him along; he is neither above nor below the rest; and it is in vain, that in order to oppose the sovereignty of the social state to that of nature, he should depart from his pre-eminence. His pre-eminence! "Wrens suffice to vacate the dictatorship of Sylla; and the heart and life of a great emperor are but a breakfast for a small worm."

Pascal, afterwards, Pascal himself, could only equal the magnificence of such language by copying it. Behold Montaigne arrived at the sublime, so profound is his indignation against the pride of man in a state of society; so animated is he to wrest the crown from this pretended king of creation, a rebel against nature!

Man has a privilege, however, that of reason; and Montaigne is lost if he admits it. Thus nothing is more touching than the transports to which the philosopher of individualism here abandons himself. He is not content with writing in an incomparable style, and with a science that

* *Essais de Montaigne*, liv. 1. chap. 22. p. 64.

† *Ibid.* liv. 1. chap. 38. p. 142.

‡ *Ibid.* liv. 2. chap. 12. p. 246.

astonishes, an epopee of intelligent animals; attacking human reason in the front, which he must beat down, if he wishes to go further, he redoubles his eloquence, vigor and invectives. Let us see! Let reason humble itself or offer its proofs. What does it know of the principle of things, of their supreme concatenation, of their end, of God, of destiny, of the measure of the worlds, of the life of the bodies in which it dwells and of the mystery of their motions? What does it know of its own essence, of the extent and bounds of its own power? Among philosophers, some have exclaimed, we possess the truth; charlatans who retained the amused crowd around their goblets; others have declared the discovery of truth impossible; from whence reached them, in the apparent modesty of this avowal, so much insolence and pride? Others again, have declared man incapable of affirming, even to his own ignorance, and have condemned him to the agonies and dishonor of an endless doubt; and these last have been reduced to giving the lie to their reasoning, in each of their own acts. Is wine in the mouth of a sick man, the same as in that of a well man? Our perceptions then modify in a thousand manners, in regard to our judgment, the form and the essence of things; in what is certainty to be placed? It matters little; take no other judge of reason than itself; the inconstancy of his choices, in the same man, the instability of his decisions, are enough to demonstrate its nothingness. That which my conviction embraces to-day, that which it maintains, perhaps violently, I shall to-morrow perhaps declare to be false. "Is it not folly to allow myself to be so often decoyed by a guide?"* But no; deceived unceasingly, we continually aspire to be so still. The last belief is always good, infallible; and until rejected among deceiving errors, we will be disposed to sacrifice every thing for it, property, honor, life, salvation—a singular power, besides, which does not resist an attack of fever, and which the least drink misleads or transforms. Think on what is seen in the chicanery of our palaces. A judge "who brings from his house ill humor arising from the gout, or jealousy, or robbery by a servant, having his whole soul tinged and steeped in anger, we cannot doubt will have his judgment altered thereby."†

In thus lowering reason, Montaigne does not strike at random. His end is precise, it is manifest. He desires to break every thing which can tie men in too close bonds. Thus with what force does he elevate himself against glory, against its pursuers, against Cicero, who was puerile enough to love it to madness. And what is his contempt for those, who, thinking that they are running after glory, and by plunging into obscure dangers; derisory Cæsars who will go to die between a wall and a ditch, great men who will struggle to take a poultry yard defended by four men with arquebusses. But patience! Behold a million of men assembled in a vast plain; there is not a soul which is not agitated with manly emotions. Death hovers over these legions, and at the very moment of striking cannot excite alarm. Is Montaigne about to be dazzled by this sight? Let us ask him? "It is but an angry and heated swarm. A breath of a contrary wind, the croaking of a flight of crows, the false

* *Essais de Montaigne*, liv. 2. chap. 12. p. 364.

† *Essais de Montaigne*.

step of a horse, the chance passage of an eagle, a dream, a voice, a sign, a morning fog, are enough to overthrow, it and sweep it from the earth. Throw only a ray of sun in its face and behold it melted away and vanished; let only a little dust set into its eyes, like honey into the mouth of our poet, and behold all our ensigns, our legions, even the great Pompey himself at their head, broken and destroyed."

Society has then nothing to offer us but false happiness, false beliefs and false grandeurs. Why do we delay? Let us fly; solitude and nature call us. Let us quit the yoke of social obligations for the sweet sovereignty of the instincts; let us be happy in that joy which comes to us in the clearness of a fine day; and if we choose to have intercourse with the world, there is no reason why on that account, we should sally forth from our own hearts; for humanity is entirely in each of us.

Never was individualism preached with such profundity, excess and splendor.

But when Montaigne enters upon the path whose trace we follow, had not Rabelais been there already before him? To rid the social state of the vengeful knaveries and of the larcenies justified by Panurgus, the grandfather of Figaro, and to reduce the code of the Thelemites to these words, "DO AS YOU PLEASE," Rabelais had not waited for Montaigne. Doubtless, but let us first note that the meaning of the Rabelaisian philosophy is very obscure, and probably impossible to fix. It is true that in the prologue to the first book of *Gargantua*, Rabelais warns us not "to judge too easily, not to be at home but in treating of mockeries, follies and joyous deceits,"—and he adds: "you should not estimate the works of men with such lightness; for you yourself say, that the garment does not make the monk."* Very well, and yet are we not permitted to rid ourselves a little of the gravity of a caution which this exclamation terminates; "The odor of wine, oh! how much more delicate, cheerful, tempting, more heavenly and delicious than oil."† The fact is, Rabelais lends himself to the most contrary interpretations. Is he for royalty, for example? Yes, for he gives to Grandgousier, to Gargantua his son, and to Pantagruel his grandson, goodness, strength, moderation and intelligence; no, for he attributes to Grandgousier a voracious appetite, and requires seventeen thousand nine hundred and thirteen cows to nurse Gargantua. He also thus speaks of hereditary majesties: "I think that many are now emperors, kings, dukes, princes and popes on the earth who are descended from some begging poetasters."‡ Without counting that the chance of birth exposes people to have Picrocolus, the tyrant, for a king, instead of Grandgousier the honest man, and so on. And beside, to what system of the human mind can a book be referred which leads philosophy into places where every thing is but a debauch of the imagination, hymns of drinkers, unveiled obscenities, the worship of joys which soil and degrade, an apotheosis of lechery.

Rabelais is certainly admirable, when causing Garantagua to be brought up by Ponocrates, he draws up true rules of education; when he closes the gates of his abbey of Thelemus on hypocrites, when he

* *Gargantua*, prologue, p. 2.

† *Ibid.* prologue, p. 3.

‡ *Ibid.* chap. I. p. 4.

calls to pilgrims to renounce their idle and useless journeys, to support their families, to instruct their children to labor; when he denounces and condemns in Pichrocolus, surrounded by his counsellors, the ravagers of provinces, and the robbers of empires; when he contrasts brother John, joyous, determined, a frank companion, laboring, working, succoring the oppressed, never idle, with the monk, "who never works like the peasant; nor guards his country like the warrior; nor cures the sick like the physician; nor preaches nor indoctrinates the world like the good evangelical teacher and pedagogue;"* when finally he makes of the criminal justice of his times, which he personifies in Grippeminaud, the following pictures too well justified since by the murder of too many heretics. "It had hands full of blood, claws like a harpy, a nose like a bill-headed battleaxe, teeth of a wild boar, eyes flaming like the jaws of hell, all covered with mortars stuck over with pestles, the claws alone appeared."† There are also seeming beauties and of an elevated order; but what charm, what force can there be in teachings, with which lessons in hideous libertinage are mingled at every page, and the sight of life carried into the confusion of a sort of universal masquerade? When the satire of social miseries presents itself in the book of Rabelais, it appears that it may be right for satire to find a place in all orgies. We may doubt the sincerity of the wisdom by seeing it in so bad a place; we tremble, when Rabelais becomes grave, lest he should be still mocking; we think we hear, concealed behind his work, a laugh at the ingenuity of those who take it into their heads to admire him, and in fact, if by the light of the lamp which guides Panurgus, we go on to the end with a firm footstep, whither shall we be led? "Into the desired island, in which is the oracle of the bottle"‡—And there "making a joyous gambol in the air on one foot," Panurgus will say, as a sovereign conclusion to Pantagruel, "We have now what we seek with such fatigue and such varied labors."§ The last phrase of the Rabelaisian philosophy is thus: TOUCH GLASSES. Individualism in Rabelais would then be but repulsive; in Montaigne, what a difference.

It is by smiling paths that Montaigne leads us to solitude. The egotism that he preaches to us has nothing of the harshness of Calvin, the grossness of Rabelais; it is a calm and mild egotism. Arrived at sombre age, Montaigne has preserved in his thoughts, like a distant echo, the melodies, which, when a child, awoke him from his sleep; he loves life, he cultivates it, he does not deny it; death may come, he awaits it untroubled, provided he is spared the cries of children and wives, the visits of alarmed friends, the light of funeral candles, and finally the mask which we place on the face of death. Why does Montaigne celebrate pleasure, that which temperance seasons, which moderation controls and prolongs? Because as much as he disdains or detests that which is the work of men—and this will not be read with impunity by Jean Jacques—so much does he delight in that which is the work of nature. And let no one be deceived; benevolent because he is happy,

* *Sagantua*, chap. 11. p. 74.

† *Ibid.* liv. 5. chap. 33. p. 478.

‡ *Pantagruel*, liv. 5. chap. 12. p. 478.

§ *Ibid.* p. 528.

he is only happy because he is a believer. Yes, a believer; for in studying him well, his pretended scepticism is but a battering ram which he uses to batter a breach in the social state; but is it not rather from the depth of his retreat that he glorifies the faith of the humble, and seeks for himself, in a certain number of reserved, unexplored beliefs, a refuge against that shifting sea of human opinions? Man could not encounter at once doubt and solitude. Montaigne is not then a sceptic; he would rather be a pantheist, if he dared avow it. Why not? Who-soever removes himself too far from the path of societies is sooner or later drawn by nature towards an abyss into which he falls engulfed, and as a consequence of this great law, which unites the extremes, individualism in philosophy leads the way to pantheism.

CHAPTER VI.

THE STRIFE OF INDIVIDUALISM AGAINST AUTHORITY.

THE PARTY OF POLITICIANS AND THE LEAGUE.

THE party of *Politicians* is formed in France—Burgherism appears upon the scene sustained by the principle of individualism—The League combats for the principle of authority—Singular alliance between the priest and the popular leader in the League; when this alliance is dissolved and the priest remains alone, the League is conquered—Triumph of the party of politicians—Henry the Fourth, their chief, carries with him individualism and toleration upon the throne—The new principle makes itself tolerated until the philosophy of the eighteenth century proclaims it, in all its aspects, and until in 1789, Burgherism, become dominant, gives it an empire by accepting it.

SUCH is, then, the movement of minds, in France of the sixteenth century. Thus announces itself, the reign of that principle of individualism which the Revolution of '89 will crown, and against which that of '93 will re-act in vain.

Calvinism was not to be seen in France, but through the smoke of civil wars. On the other hand, the revival of letters by spreading a taste for the literature and the arts of antiquity, tended to substitute ideas entirely profane for theological studies. It happened then, that of these two things associated by Luther, a new principle and a new religion. French Burgherism rejected the religion and guarded the principle. We are now at a solemn period; behind Calvinism, which is extinguished in blood, the party of the politicians is rising.

This party was neither that of faith, nor of devotion and strong virtues; it was the party of moderation, good sense and tranquil and regulated egotism. It began with Erasmus, it was to lead to Voltaire. His doctrine, which the eighteenth century was to complete and cause to triumph for the advantage of Burgherism, was to call itself by turns, in philosophy, rationalism, in politics, the equilibrium of powers, in industrial pursuits, illimitable competition. In the sixteenth century it already called itself by the fine name, toleration.

Feeble and uncertain as *the party of politicians* at first appeared, its entrance on the scene was enough to freeze with alarm all those in whom the flame of old beliefs still burned, all the partisans of the principle of authority. From this alarm was born the League.

Formed in 1576 at Peronné by some gentlemen who swore to remain united for the maintenance of the Catholic and Roman religion, the League, from its origin, revealed its spirit. The act of union of 1576 provided that they should give it a head. It pledged itself to sustain the royal authority, reserving the rights of the Estates and the fundamental laws of the kingdom. The associates bound themselves to each other in an absolute manner; they mutually pledged each other against *any person whomsoever*, and took God to witness their resolution to die in his cause.*

Thus to defend the principle of authority taken in its most general and elevated acceptation, to defend in its spiritual representative, the pope, and if necessary, against its purely temporal representative, the king, such was the end of the League. It placed the church above the state. Now, in this logically developed conception, kings had no longer an imprescriptible and inviolable right; they were subjected, like the least of their subjects, to a religious rule, which served for the limit, modification and condition of their power. Then, by violating this rule they became unworthy; by declaring themselves heretics, they became rebels, and the people could and ought to overthrow them.

So that, starting from the sovereignty of the pope, they led to the sovereignty of the people.

In fact the League was remarkable in this, that being a crusade preached against the then new spirit, it was more revolutionary than even the revolution it desired to arrest. The League was found on the way which leads from Gregory the Seventh to the Committee of Public Safety.

Its actions responded to its doctrines. Let any one open the history of the League and the writings of those times; everywhere is theocracy mixed with the democratic sentiment; everywhere is a close and passionate alliance between the popular leader and the priest.

In 1576 and 1577 the League consisted only of some gentlemen, and Henry the Third had declared himself its head, in the hopes of remaining its master. But soon what a difference. The League is no longer aristocratical, but sacerdotal and communal; it is no longer confined to the country, it gushes out in Paris. It is created by a mere citizen named Rocheblonde, the curates of Saint Benedict and Saint Severin and a canon of Soissons, to set in motion the sixteen quarters of Paris, that commission of sixteen, so soon transformed into a municipal dictatorship.† The pulpits are places for harangues; the curates are applauded in them as if they were tribunes; enter a church, it is the forum.

How are those to be despised who have only seen in such a movement the results of the intrigues of an ambitious family, and the

* See the act of Union in Palma Cayet, Chronologie Novenaire, Introduction, tom. 1. p. 264, et suiv. Collect Petitot.

† Satire Ménippée, Remarques, t. 2. p. 430. Edit Le Duchat.

dynastical pretensions of Henry of Guise. The Leaguers went to Henry of Guise, because they had need of a chief whom the common cause would not be ashamed to avow, and who belonged wholly to them. Could Henry the Third have been this leader? Henry the Third, who had revived in a Catholic court the infamous amours of pagan emperors and their famous prostitutions. It is true, that after having gained over the Huguenots the battles of Jarnac and Moncontour, he had commanded the massacres of the Saint Bartholomew, and if needed, could have called as witnesses of his orthodoxy, the phantoms, which, on the first night of his arrival from Poland, he thought he saw around his bed.* It is even true, that he sometimes promenaded the city with a large chaplet in his hand;† that he willingly changed his feminine garments for the sack of a penitent; that he wore a girdle garnished with death's heads, and that on the soiled couch which received his minions, he meditated the erection of fraternities. Mockeries of a hypocrite, said the Leaguers.‡ Henry the Third was compelled besides to have transactions with heresy, to support himself upon the politicians, an interest which so many edicts of pacification, granted rather than obtained, proved. The Leaguers were not deceived in this. They pursued in Henry the Third, a prince who had interest foreign to their cause. What on the other hand they loved in Henry of Guise was a man, who with Catholicism, was every thing, without it, nothing. Moreover, Guise had bravery, decision, and in more than one trait of character resembled his father, though he had less elevation of intellect and generosity of heart.

The impatience of the Leaguers to place the sceptre in his hand did not however break out violently until after the death of the Duke of Alençon, the brother of the king. For Henry the Third had no children, and on his death, it was a Protestant, the King of Navarre, the new principle, which mounted the throne.

Certainly, if every thing was then bounded by the agitations at the Hôtel de Ville, the inflammatory discourses of preachers, the contradictory manifestoes of the Cardinal de Bourbon and the Bearnese, or even by that *War of the Three Henriess*, into which the Leaguers hurried with such sinister violence, and, as it were, dragging after them the alarmed monarch, we might perhaps be permitted to doubt the greatness of the quarrel. But no! The antagonism of principles so ruled here the lustre of rival pretensions, that all Europe was shaken beneath the empire of a powerful emotion, and whilst Philip the Second was promising the armies of Spain to the League, whilst Sixtus the Fifth was rising in Rome to excommunicate the King of Navarre, Theodore Beza, on the other hand, traversed attentive Germany,§ alarmed it, lest its revolution should be speedily annihilated, and pushed the crusade of Luther across the Rhine.

In this vast conflict the Bearnese and Henry of Guise represented

* *Memoires de Villeroy*, p. 259. Collect. Michand.

† *L'Estoile. Journal de Henry Third*, t. 1. p. 139.

‡ *Boucher de justa Henrici Tertii abdicatione*, cap. 22. p. 193.

§ *Anquetil, Esprit de la Ligue*, t. 2. liv. 5.

serious, immense interests. But what did Henry the Third represent? The Leaguers were unable to refuse him as a chief, without encountering him as an obstacle; they determined to overthrow him. The celebrated day on which Paris rose in 1588, shows us already, in some of its aspects, our Paris of 1830; the sovereignty of the people at the Hotel de Ville, the barricades, the overwhelmed Swiss, the multitude surrounding the Louvre, the flying monarch.* Called by the sixteen, during the preparations for the revolt, Guise hastened thither notwithstanding the prohibition of the king, and he entered Paris in the midst of public acclamations along a path which the women strewed with flowers. As he passed along, a young female raised her mask and exclaimed, "Good prince, since you are here, we are all safe."† It was the cry of the League. Why? Because Henry of Guise was more and better than the man of a party; he was the man of a principle. Fortunate if, in the intoxication of his part, he had not thought himself beyond the reach of defeat, assassination. He showed a proud obstinacy to the Estates of Blois, in thinking that a soldier such as he was too great a victim for an assassin like Henry the Third. Informed of the plot, he went on saying, "*He would not dare it*,"‡ fatal phrase, which was to kill Gustavus the Third, and had slain Cæsar. In his turn Guise was to expiate the profundity of his contempt. It blinded him to the last moment, and the excess of his disdain did not abandon him, when raising the velvet curtain of the retreat in which the murderer concealed himself, he felt twenty stabs of a sword in his body.§

We can then well judge that for the League, Henry of Guise was an instrument, not an end. Far from bewailing, the Leaguers redoubled their energy, and as they had used the life of their leader, so they now used his death. Hence arose that delirium of Paris in tears; that vast lamentation; those images in wax pierced with daggers, which were exposed on the altars and in the streets; those crowds, which, in the temples, at the voice of furious preachers, raised their hands and swore to die; those hundred thousand torches carried through the city, then extinguished, trampled under feet, whilst the vengeful cry arose towards heaven, "Oh! God, extinguish the race of Valois."|| Was not all this the love of a party for a dead man? No, no! The Leaguers had need of the House of Guise, as an army has need of a standard. It was for this they called Mayenne; it was for this the Prevost of the Merchants and the Sheriffs hastened to take the posthumous child of Balare, held him at the baptismal font and named him Paris de Lorraine.¶

It is known how democratical and revolutionary was the movement that followed. The multitude created, by election, a council of *forty* to govern them. In proclaiming the deposition of the king, the Sorbonne

* See the details of the day of the barricades in the *Memoires de la Ligue*, t. 2. p. 315, et suiv. † Ibid. p. 317.

‡ L'Estoile, *Journal de Henry Tertii*, t. 1. p. 375.

§ See the different accounts of the death of the Duke of Guise in Palma Cayet. *Chronologie Novénnaire*. Introduction, p. 463, et suivant.

|| Palma Cayet *Chronologie Novénnaire*, t. 2. p. 1, et suiv. L'Estoile, *Journal de Henry Tertii*, t. 1. p. 379, et suiv. Labitte, *de la démocratie chez les prédicateurs de la Ligue*, chap. 1. p. 45.

¶ Palma Cayet, t. 2. p. 3.

only gave the forms of the time to a decree already pronounced by the Sixteen in the public square, and Bussey de Clerc, one of them, conducted the Parliament a prisoner to the Bastille, whose gates they opened on the next day, in order to show that henceforth there was but one truly legal authority in Paris, the people.* At the same time they spread these maxims which we read in all the writings of the League: "It is the will of God which makes kings, and this will of God, is the voice of the people which declares it."†—"An heretic king, a guilty king, can and should be overthrown."‡—"The kingdom of France is elective."§—"A title of nobility is personal; no one is noble who is not virtuous."||

There were at this time beyond doubt, frightful declamations; it was whilst shaking the crucifix, that some priests glorified vengeance and preached regicide. Jean Boucher, the Curate of Saint Benedict; Cueilley, the Curate of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois; Guincestre, the Curate of Saint Gervais; Le Petit Feuillant, and twenty other sermonizers, no less rabid, prepared the tragedy of Saint Cloud; and their terrible imprecations resounded still in the soul of Jacques Clement, when after having received the wages of his crime, in advance, in the arms of Madame de Montpensier, he hastened to assassinate Henry the Third. But whilst condemning the furies which the dark genius of the League enkindled, let us not get forget that it gave birth to heroism.

What for example is more surprising than the constancy with which the Leaguers defended Paris against the conqueror of Ivry and famine? The capital was reduced to such horrible extremities, that fifty thousand men died of famine.¶ They made bread of bones. Snakes were found in the deserted streets on dead bodies. A mother ate her child,** and not a voice was heard to exclaim, "Surrender." Panigarolle, alone among the preachers, faltered for an instant; but they shamed him of his fear, and he endeavored to obliterate it by a sermon which commenced, "War, war, war."†† The curates ordered the sale of the sacred vases; they ran their bells into balls;‡‡ they went about carrying halberds and bucklers in the processions, which must be judged of by the effects produced, and not by the partial mockeries of the *Satire Menippée*; there was some of them even, who like Edme Bourgoing, fought like soldiers and died like martyrs.§§.

Useless exaltation! Last sparkling of the flame which revives as it is about to expire. The Duke of Parma approached, the King of Navarre

* Palma Cayet, t. 2. p. 7, et suiv.

† Pigenat, Curé de Saint Nicholas des Champs, de l'Aveuglement et la grande inconsideration des Politiques, chap. 1. 1592.

‡ Boucher, Curé de Saint Benoit, de justa Henri Tertii abdicatione, lib. 1. 9. p. 44. Pigenat, chap. 3. p. 41.

§ Dialogue du Mahenestre et du Manant, t. 3. de la *Satire Menippée*, p. 376.

|| Ibid. p. 556.

¶ Procès-Verbal des Etats generaux de 1593, by M. Auguste Bernard, preface, p. 43.

** See concerning the siege of Paris les Memoires de la Ligue, t. p. p. 296, et suiv. Palma Cayet, t. 3. p. 99. Labitte, p. 123.

†† *Satire Menippée*, t. 2. Remarques, p. 139.

‡‡ Labitte, p. 124.

§§ One of the most violent detractors of the League, M. Labitte himself, admits it, p. 83 and 84.

raised the siege, and the League remained no less to perish, because the germ of its destruction was in its own bosom. To wish to save the principle of authority by combining the views of Gregory the Seventh with a premature development of democracy, was a stroke of audacity unheard of in history. The League was at once too much advanced for the past, and too much advanced for the future. On the day in which it became manifest that the efforts of the priesthood were for the advantage of democracy, the dissolution of the League began. The gentlemen who were the first promoters of the holy union, were astonished at the consequences of an alliance, of which they had not at first perceived the entire bearing, and they recoiled in alarm* when they heard words of equality come from the mouth of that people, the auxiliary and the organ of their God. The prelates of illustrious origin felt umbrage at the tumultuous popularity of the curates, until finally the League counted in its ranks only fifteen bishops out of an hundred and four. Sixtus the Fifth himself drew back the hand he had extended to the Leaguers on finding them so united to the democracy. The curates of Paris remained, and even all these had not in their hearts the respect for the people which was impressed on their sermons. What are we to think of the zealous demagogue Jean Boucher, when we read in a book of his, written in Latin and for the learned only, "We should not understand by the word *people*, that confused and disorderly crowd, a fierce beast with many heads, which allows itself to be led by any one who carries it along in fury and in madness."†

Let it be noted, the force of things was pushing on the triumph of the *Politicians*. Had they not among them the Huguenots whom they had absorbed; the amiable and warlike genius of the Prince of Bearn for their leader; the anti-French character, which the interested patronage of Philip the Second was giving to their enemies; the secret sympathies and underhanded movements of the Parliament of Paris, that same Parliament, which, on the 30th of January, 1589, had adhered to the Union in a solemn manner, and which, during the siege of the capital, had prohibited any one from speaking of peace with the King of Navarre? Were not the *Politicians* sustained, borne along by that mysterious and invincible power which wished the human conscience to be declared free?

The League was then to be engulfed by the natural movement of history; and it is to be remarked that the true destroyer of the League was its own chief, the Duke de Mayenne. In introducing into the Council of *Forty*, fourteen members who were secret enemies to the sovereignty of the people, Mayenne had prepared the ruin of the power of the Sixteen; he consummated it, when under pretext of punishing the murder of the President Brisson, he handed over to the executioner four of these popular leaders. It was to annihilate that which represented the revolutionary and democratic side of the League; it was to destroy

* Dialogue du Maheustre et du Manant, p. 470.

† Quæ Bellæ ne ultorum Caput est, etc., de justa Henri Tertii abdicatione, cap. 9. p. 44.

‡ Procès Verbaux des Etats de 1593. Preface, p. 42.

its nature since it consisted wholly in the effort at a strict alliance between the church and the public square, between the priest and the popular leader.

No one is ignorant that the denouement of this grand drama took place in 1593, in the States General convened for the election of a king. To whom should they give a crown suspended between the House of Lorraine, the Infanta of Spain, the grand-daughter of Henry the Second, and the Prince of Bearn. The question was settled by the abjuration of the leader of the *Politicians*, and the Bearnese became Henry the Fourth. But, in rendering its enemy catholic, the League which appeared to conquer, was in fact definitely and finally conquered, for the abjuration of Henry the Fourth was not sincere.

It is this which justly gives to him great historical importance. Writing to Gabrielle d'Estrées, he says, "I am about to take the perilous leap," and thinking that Paris was worth a mass, Henry the Fourth placed with him on the throne indifference in matters of religion. France was to gain by it the Edict of Nantes, the first appearance of the doctrine which the philosophy of the eighteenth century was to complete, the first step towards the enfranchisement of the individual.

Thus the entrance of Henry the Fourth into Paris was saluted as opening a new era. The League was crushed; it was laden with outrages. Its history, written by its conquerors immediately after the victory, is but a brilliant and bitter pamphlet. Whilst oblivion was seizing on the *Dialogue du Maheustre et du Manant*, a grave and melancholy testament of the dying League, the *Satire Menippée* acquired the importance of a work written for a triumph; credibility was demanded for it from posterity, and the League, judged by Protestant writers and caricatured in an ingenious libel, was no longer but a turbulent, greedy, vindictive faction, sold to the King of Spain. It was forgotten that most of the Sixteen, and especially Compans, Cotteblanche, Acharie and Decreil entered the Union rich and left it ruined;* that the Parliament informed against them after their defeat, in December 1591, without a single witness coming forward to accuse them;† that venality in the League was the exception, not the rule; that the expenses of the war engulfed the greater part of the gold of Philip the Second; that in the Union, the partisans of a Spanish candidate were in a minority, and that this candidate never had any serious chance, as the Leaguer Panigarolle wrote to the Duke of Savoy;‡ and finally that within the States General, the pretensions of Philip the Second had no more animated and eloquent adversary than the celebrated Leaguer, Guillaume Rose.

The truth is, the League produced what very strong and extravagant beliefs almost always have, odious violence and courageous devotion; but it undertook an impossibility in attempting an united triumph for both religious ideas, already passed away, and political ideas, whose time had not come.

The cause of the period was that which Henry the Fourth represented, when, by the edict of Nantes, he rendered the state responsible for the

* *Dialogue du Maheustre et du Manant*, p. 430.

† *Ibid.* p. 479.

‡ Labitte, p. 102.

maintenance of toleration. Now come the philosophers of the eighteenth century; Henry the Fourth will be the hero of Voltaire, and from tolerance in religion, the thinkers led by Voltaire, will deduce in succession rationalism in philosophy, the regime of guarantees in politics, and the *let-alone* doctrine in industrial pursuits.

• Behold, how disengaged from the theological form in which Luther had enclosed it, and despoiled of the violent character which Calvin had impressed on it, individualism took foothold in France. It was to conquer society; but it was necessary for that purpose, that Burgherism, to which it especially belonged, should become the dominant class. • It is to show how it became so, that the second part of this book will be devoted.

BOOK SECOND.

BURGERISM.

PROGRESS OF THE CLASS THROUGH WHOM INDIVIDUALISM IS TO FOUND AN EMPIRE.

By Burgerism, I mean that ensemble of citizens, who, possessing instruments of labor or capital, labor with the resources belonging to them, and only depend on others to a certain extent.

These are more or less free.

The people is the ensemble of citizens, who, possessing no capital, depend on others entirely for procuring the first necessities of life.

These are free only in name.

Burgerism has developed itself in France prodigiously. It has conceived great designs, rendered great services to the cause of humanity, and, with the assistance of the people, accomplished great things. But it was commanded to accept those who had served it as auxiliaries, and to regard them as brethren; it did not understand this in 1789, and it was that which gave birth to the storms that followed. But before saying what use burgerism has made of its power, it is important to show how that power was acquired and established.

If we examine carefully how French burgerism has developed itself in history, we will see that it attained

To the enjoyment of civil rights through the Communes.

To political power through the States General.

To independence in laical life through the Parliaments supported by the philosophers.

To industrial sovereignty through the wardenships of trades and the privileges of freemen.

Through the Communes, it destroyed feudal aristocracy.

Through the States General, it mastered royalty.

Through the Parliaments, it broke the yoke of the Church.

Through the wardenships of trades and the privileges of freemen, it ruled the people.

We will follow it in these different phases of its development. But as the two first were alone accomplished when Protestantism took foothold in France, they alone will now engage our attention: by The two last will have their place in the picture of the eighteenth century.

CHAPTER I.

PROGRESS OF BURGHERISM.

THE COMMUNES.

Burghers and Peasants—The old Feudality ; what constituted its lustre and its strength
 —The Communes were but a military organization of Burgherism—Feudality conquered by the Communes, rather than by the Kings.

AMONG those who have spoken of the third estate, of its development, its destiny, the brilliant part it played in the Revolution of 1789, no one has said that in the bosom of the third estate itself there existed the germ of a revolution still more profound and formidable. Did the third estate form but a single class below the nobility? And should we regard as a purely contemporaneous fact the division of society into burghers and mean persons? It would be a grave error. In examining the historical documents of the middle ages, whether they are the charters granted to the communes, or the ordinances made by the kings, we find always these words, *burghers and peasants*. Thus, in fact, below the nobles there were two very distinct classes. "The vile persons of the vulgar," said Loiseau, in his *Traité des Ordres*, "had no right to be qualified as burghers. The proof is, they had no share in the honors of the city, nor voice in its assemblies, in which burgherism consists."* Here is the distinction clearly established. The peasants were those who had no right to participate in the business of the commune.

The right of burgherism constituted a privilege. This is so true, that one did not generally become a burgher but by fulfilling some formalities previously determined upon, and performing certain conditions which were not given to all to fulfil. We read the following in an ordinance decreed in 1327, by Philip the Handsome :

"When any one wishes to obtain the rights of burghership, he must go to the place where he desires to become a burgher, and must go to the prevost of the place or his lieutenant, or to the mayor when he receives the burghers, and say to that officer, 'Sir, I demand from you the right of a burgher in this city, and I am prepared to do what is required.' Then the prevost, or the lieutenant, or the mayor, in the presence of two or three burghers of the city, of whose names the letters should make mention, shall take surety for his entrance into the rights of a burgher, and that the recipiendary shall build or buy within a year and a day a house of the value of sixty sols parisais at least."

Let no one think that this ordinance established a new right, it only recited an established one. Let us go back to the period of the great insurrection of the communes, and cast our eyes over the charter of

* *Traité des Ordres*. Chap. 9. No. 8.

Laon, which served as a model for so many others. Article 15 of this provides—

“Whosoever shall be received into this peace, (commune,) shall, within the space of a year, build himself a house, or buy vines, or bring into the city a sufficient quantity of moveables, to be enabled to satisfy justice, if there should be by chance any subject of complaint against him.”

In this France of the middle ages, so disjointed, so parcelled out, in which so many cities were isolated from each other, in which the customs were so different, in which there was not even unity in language, it is very natural that the right of burgherism was not acquired everywhere on the same conditions. Thus, to become a burgher, in accordance with the customs of Calais, one must pay the sum of twenty-five sols tournois, and that of forty sols, in accordance with the custom of Metz. In the commune of La Gorgue, they must pay forty farthings, and at Nieuport, the price of burgherism was left to be fixed by the sheriffs. In certain cities burgherism was acquired by marriage; in others by prescription; in some others it was enough to be the son of a burgher, in order to become a burgher. But the general, striking, incontestible fact which springs from the diversity, is the line of demarcation traced between the burghers and the peasants.

“When one not a burgher, it said in the custom of La Gorgue, succeeds a burgher, he must pay for the right of issue the *thirteenth denier of the value of his property in the city.*”

This granted, I say that it is by means of the communes that burgherism overthrew the feudal regime.

How astonishing the strife between the lords and the communes. What a singular epopee. On this side, tradesmen, artizans, the sons of the conquered, acting beneath an hereditary chain; on that, the warriors, whom a taste for adventures possesses, whom an indomitable pride animates, and who have in their blood a love of combats. That the first of these two opposing societies should have been conquered was very natural. Why did the contrary happen?

Since 1789, the feudal regime has been treated with a very puerile disdain. Behold, how great was the strength which this feudal society so decried drew from the disinterestedness and vivacity of its faith. At the end of the eleventh century a monk exclaims, that the Christians of the Holy Land must be freed, and the tomb of the Saviour of men be wrested from the infidel. He preaches it, and suddenly feudal society experiences an heroic start. There is no system of administration which causes the unity of movement; no political bond which unites the different parties of which it is composed—no, matter! behold it move on the same day, almost at the same hour. Behold it, by the force of a moral lien alone, rise with a sudden transport, to go to an unknown country. The pilgrims take the casque; adieu to the manor house, perhaps for ever. Squires are in attendance, war-horses neigh, pennons are floating, the army is on its march. Has our modern civilization, so learned, so active, especially in France, ever produced a more passionate and energetic movement?

To this moral force, born from the ardor of belief, was added that to

which the principle of devotion gives birth. Never had this principle received a more vigorous and more fruitful application than in the middle ages. Chivalry was not an institution; it had nothing systematical in its origin; it was the natural product of feudal manners, simple manners, formed by an inconceivable mixture of ferocity and tenderness. "I swear," said the young man, admitted to the rank and life of warriors, "I swear to maintain the rights of the feeblest, of widows, orphans and ladies, in a good quarrel." It is known that on the eve, or the day before the eve of his admission, the aspirant must wear a red garment. It was the symbolical designation of the bloody part which was reserved for him in the world, and he did not put on this emblematical robe until after bathing, because he must be pure, in order to devote himself. Follow these formalities to their close, everything in them is simple and touching, full of grace and grandeur. The recipiendary reaches the church, he kneels before the lord who is to arm him as a knight, and who says to him, "For what purpose do you wish to enter the order? If it is to become rich, to repose yourself and be honored, without doing honor to chivalry, you are unworthy of it." Hence arise those traditions of generosity, so religiously followed; hence that wandering protection so long granted to misfortune.

The manners were doubtless rude, and yet through this irregularity of brutal passions, to which the habit of private wars furnished a constant aliment, woman appears to us protected passionately, honored equally with God, and all-powerful through her weakness. At a tourney, which took place at Carighan, in Piedmont, Bayard, as is said in his history, refused to receive the prize he had merited, affirming that all the honor of the day belonged to a muff that his lady had given him. The historian adds that the muff was rendered to the lady.

What is more singular than this calm, smiling sovereignty, precious because it is fragile, hovering thus above the violent empire of the sword? That this worship of woman was not born from the Christian philosophy is true, but it is one of the glories of feudality to have allowed itself to be so easily penetrated by Christianity.

The feudal society, then, appears in history supported on those three grand powers by which societies endure—faith, devotion, love.

Should you study the history of feudality in the connections of the possessors of fiefs to each other, you will be struck with their nobility and morality, even in their inequality. The liege lord owed support and protection to his vassal; the vassal owed affection and fidelity to his liege lord. Such were the terms of the contract on which investiture and homage reposed. Command thus lost its harshness; obedience its degradation. This reciprocity of duties was established even between the members of the feudal hierarchy—the only kind of equality which was possible between the strong and the weak, in a society still imperfect. As, however, political unity did not exist, as there was not in the centre of that society any power sufficiently extended to draw together all its extremities, to penetrate all its parts, to cause all its springs to move harmoniously, iniquities took place, savage passions had their career. It happened that the large fiefs extended themselves at the expense of the

small, and that the protection due to the vassal became a pretext for usurpation, or a cause of tyranny; right was sometimes bent, force triumphed. But these violences were not committed without having to break through many obstacles. If the feudal regime had its abuses, it had also its guarantees. The vassal, attacked by his liege lord, frequently found in the superior suzerain a protector usually interested to defend him; and such was the connection of all these small partial royalties, that they naturally formed an equilibrium.

Studied in the connections subsisting between the lords and their laborers and serfs, feudality doubtless presents itself under a less favorable aspect. Here everything is arbitrary, odious; it is the insolent abuse of strength; it is the excess of victory in its most frightful aspect. And yet is the condition of the common herd of our day much preferable to that of the serfs of former times? What the serfs wanted in dignity, they had in greater security. They could think of their tomorrow without growing pale. If they groaned beneath a rude tyranny, they at least looked it in the face; they touched it, as it were, with their finger; they could at least designate it by its proper name. Is not that alas heavier, which that frightful and vague word, *misery*, now expresses? Liberty with misery and isolation, it is a servitude also, and oh! my God, what a servitude! The feudal despotism was in men; the Burgher despotism is in things; a mysterious despotism which is felt everywhere, no part of which is seen, and in the bosom of which the poor man feels himself dying, unable to tell what kills him. If then we are to judge of the instability of a regime by the greatness of the calamities to which it gives birth, the feudal regime ought not to have had less endurance, than that presents which has raised itself upon its ruins.

We have seen that the feudal society was destitute of unity in its ensemble; but even that was of a nature to render it durable. Unity cannot exist for the benefit of action, without existing also for the benefit of reaction. Wherever power moves easily and vigorously, revolutionary movements are formidable and decisive, if society is not happy. Imagine a country in which the centralization is excessive, power will be strong in it so long as it shall last, but a sudden effort will suffice to change society. Feudal society had a thousand heads; to strike them off at a single blow was impossible; thus from the tenth to the sixteenth century what partial shocks, what successive blows. Feudality held its own however. And why should we be astonished? All those lords dwelt in the midst of their property; they lived isolated in their strong castles; revolutions must be as local as the tyranny which provoked them.

The feudal regime, however, was not without vices appropriate to it. The hierarchy of persons, in this system, was calculated, as is known, on the hierarchy of landed estates. The feudal service was due in consequence of the domain that one possessed. The feudal hierarchy must then crumble to pieces, when the territorial hierarchy, which served as its foundation and model, was destroyed. Now could the territorial hierarchy be maintained with the permission granted to proprietors of alienating their property? Evidently not. The inalienability of lands was consequently the vital principle of feudality. Thus up to the reign

of the Valois a gentleman was sternly interdicted from disposing of his fiefs without the permission of the king. But this interdiction did not last long. In fact the ordinances of the Valois raised it. From the time of Guy de Tournebu, the Lord of Maisy and of Laise, who was permitted, in 1292, to sell a part of his lands for a fixed sum, authorized alienations became more and more frequent. The feudal regime received by it a mortal blow. And it could not be otherwise. In Germany, Poland, and especially in England, feudality has always been healthy and robust, because, in these different countries, real property is perpetuated through the eldest sons in the same families, without division or alteration; because the rights of primogeniture and substitution are there regarded as inviolable; because finally, in them territorial property has possessed immutability as its dominant characteristic. In France, it was difficult for it to be so, on account of the genius of the people, that restless, travelling, cosmopolite genius, which led the possessors of fiefs far from their domains, almost all of them great runners after adventure, and born contemnners of the labors of an agricultural life. There was among them such an impatient desire to leave their lands and their castles, whether it was a tournament that called them, or an expedition against the English, or better still, some pilgrimage at once pious and bloody. This existence, entirely external, induced monstrous expenses; they wished to have fine horses, rich armor; they gave brilliant feasts; they ruined themselves for the love of ladies. On returning to their firesides, they all found themselves horribly crippled with debts. Litigations came, which led to alienations of property. Royalty lent itself to it with a very good grace, from hatred of the nobility; and the Parliament, sprung from the conquered people, rendered still easier the path, which led the blind scions of the conquering race unto the abyss. There was then in the constitution of feudality, combined with the particular character of French genius, a radical vice, by means of which it must sooner or later perish. And yet such a regime contained in itself enough germs of life to maintain itself for a long time, if its free development had not been opposed by a foreign element. Feudality succumbed beneath the efforts of *Burgherism organized into Communes*.

There has been much and variously written about the communes. The first question which presents itself is, what were the communes considered in their origin? The reply is written in all the charters.* The communes were confederations of burghers pledging themselves, under the sanctity of an oath, to support one another.

It is very easy to define the end which the burghers proposed to themselves in confederating. They bent beneath the yoke of arbitrary taxes; the power of making wills was taken from them; their sons could not enter the ecclesiastical state, nor their daughters be married, without

* The following are some examples, to cite them all is impossible: Charter of Bray, "Omnus communiam jurabunt." Rec. des Ordon., t. 11. p. 296. Charters of Compeigne, and de Crespy in the Valois. "Juraverunt quod alter alteri secundum opinionem suam auxiliabitur." Rec. des Ordon., t. 11. p. 311. Charter of Doullens. "Unusquisque jurato suo fidem, vim, auxilium, consiliumque prebebit." Rec. des Ordon., t. 11. p. 262.

buying the consent of their lords; in a word, they enjoyed none of the rights of which civil liberty is composed. If the cities formed themselves into communes, it was to obtain these different rights, and at the same time acquire the military power which was to make them respected. This, too, the charters prove.*

M. Augustin Thierry appears to me to have been deceived as to the nature and bearing of the communal movement when he wrote;† "To guarantee their association, the members of the commune constituted, at first tumultuously and afterwards in a regular manner, an *elective government*, resembling in some respects the municipal government of the Romans, and differing from it in others." The *elective government* belongs in no way to the formation of the communes. It existed in almost all the cities of the Gauls long before the communal movement, out of which M. Thierry derives it. Nothing will be found in the charters, the only history of the communes, having reference either to the election of the mayor and sheriffs by the burghers or to the attributes of the local magistracy. They speak in them, it is true, of the *majeur* and the *jurés*, but as magistrates whose jurisdiction had been for a long time recognized, and did not require to be either created or defined. M. Guizot‡ has very well remarked this on the subject of the charter of Laon; but if he will take the pains to turn over the leaves of the *Collection of Ordinances* patiently, he may see that what is true of the charter of Laon, is equally so with all those which are sprung from the insurrections of the burghers against their lords. It is only in the *new cities*, in which every thing was to be created, that regulations are found concerning the city administration by its municipal officers. I repeat, if the cities formed themselves into communes, it was to conquer the free development of the civil and military life, and not to obtain *municipal franchises*, franchises which they had already possessed for a long time.

Historians have committed a great wrong in confounding the history of the municipalities with that of the communes. They are two entirely distinct histories. The communes have not had at all an administrative character; they have been essentially warlike. Feudality had founded its empire by the sword; it was then by the sword it must be destroyed. Since the establishment of fiefs, exercise in arms was permitted only to those who lived nobly.§ Well, the establishment of the communes gave

* Charter granted by Philip Augustus, in 1189, to the city of Sens. Article 12. "*Mortuus autem manas omnino excludimus.*" Rec. des Ordon. t. 11. p. 262.

† Charter granted in 1182, to the city of Chaumont. Article 1. "*Ut omnes qui in eadem permanent communitate ab omni tallia—liberi et immunes jure perpetuo permaneant.*" Rec. des Ordon. t. 11. p. 226.

‡ Charter of Soissons. Article 5. "*Homines etiam communionis hujus uxores quas cumque voluerint, licentia a dominis requisita, accipient, et si domini hoc concedere noluerint et absque consensu et concessione domini sui aliquis uxorem alterius potestatis duxerit, et si dominus suus in eum implacitaverit quinque tantum solidis illi inde emendaverit.*" Rec. des Ordon. t. 11. p. 219.

§ M. Augustin Thierry, in citing this last article of the charter of Soissons, has omitted the word *tantum*, a grave omission, as it is the very word which expresses the limitation placed on the pretensions of the lord; to reject it, is to change the sense of the clause cited.

† Lettres sur l'histoire de France. p. 256.

‡ Cours d'histoire Moderne. p. 183.

§ Traité de la noblesse par de la Roque, chap. 7. p. 10.

birth to the necessity of overthrowing this oppressive privilege. All the historical documents of the twelfth century bear witness to the essentially warlike character of the communes. Thus they had the right of peace and war; there is no doubt about this point. By the charter of Villeneuve in Beauvoisis, no one could, during an expedition, lend money to an *enemy of the commune*; and the charter of Beauvais prohibited all burghers from speaking to an *enemy of the commune* during the war.* Every inhabitant of Rouen was bound on the order of the magistrates to sally out, armed, from the city; a delinquent was condemned to pay a fine or see his house pulled down. Finally, we read in the charter of Roze, that if any one causes damage to the commune, and refuses, after being summoned by the mayor to repair it, that the mayor may march at the head of the inhabitants to destroy the dwelling of the culprit, the king promising his assistance, if he dwells in a strong place of which the members of the commune cannot render themselves masters.† So that to make war was not only a right of the communes, it was their duty. Suger relates, that Louis the Fat having besieged Fleury, the *communes* of the parishes of the country took part in the siege. What sense would the word *communes* have here, if it were not synonymous with the word *militia*? Oderic Vital, an author who was cotemporaneous with the establishment of communes, says formally, that the obligation of military service was the sole object of the communes.‡ He adds, "After the reign of Philip the First, Louis the Sixth was obliged to implore the aid of all the bishops of France to arrest the mutinies and highway robberies that desolated his kingdom. *It was then that the communes were established.*" In his remarkable preface to the eleventh volume of the *Collection of Ordinances*, the learned M. de Brequigny supposes Oderic Vital to have, from the depth of his convent, bestowed too much honor here on the bishops; but be that opinion as it may, it results clearly from the passage we have cited, that in the time of Oderic Vital the communes were regarded as burgherism under arms, and he gives a new and striking proof of it. When a city *had no commune*, it was its lord whom it followed to the war, to render itself, without prejudice to him, according to the duties of his fief, to the orders of the king; when on the contrary, a city *was a commune*, it owed military service immediately to the king. What are we to conclude from this, but that the right of communes was the right granted to the cities to make wars, freed from all the regulations of feudality? Finally, were not those charters that consecrated the conquests of burgherism true treaties of peace? The charter granted in 1128, by Philip Augustus, is designated by the words *institutio pacis*, the establishment of peace.§ In the charter granted in 1112, to divers places dependencies of the abbey of Aurigny, we read, "*Habiant communiam pro pace conservanda*," (that they may have a commune to preserve the peace.)|| And it is by these expressions *pactum pactis*, (compact of peace,) that Yves, bishop of Chartres, designates the charter

* Recueil des Ordon. t. 11. p. 624.

† Ibid. p. 228.

‡ Collection des histoires de Normandie, by Duchesne.

§ Rec. des Ordon. t. 11. p. 186.

|| Ibid. p. 308.

of Amiens,* in a letter addressed to Louis the Sixth. The word *peace* is always employed in opposition to the word *commune*.

Besides, it is known what the law was for the formation of the armies under the second race. The cavalry consisted of nobles. The infantry was furnished by the cities. Now the obligation imposed on the cities of furnishing foot-soldiers to the army, coincides precisely with the institution of the communes, whose true character it thus determines. By means of the communes burgherism not only placed itself in a defensive position against the possessors of fiefs; it introduced itself into the composition of the armies, it took root in them, it drew insensibly a part of the military force to itself.

The commune was a warlike association, sprung from the legalized revolt of the burghers against the lords.

Hence there is a profound distinction between the municipality and the commune, which does not appear to us to have been until now understood.

The municipality is the city considered by itself. The commune is the city in its connections with the powers that weigh upon it.

The municipality is burgherism administering itself through magistrates sprung from its own bosom. The community is burgherism seizing the axe and causing feudality, which cramps it in its flight, to capitulate.

Do you require a manifest proof of the reality of this distinction? The charter of Guise, granted in 1279, accords to the city the right of having judges chosen, it gives it a municipal power. And on the other hand, it prohibits it expressly from even desiring to be a commune. COMMUNE, MUNICIPALITY were then two essentially distinct things.

M. Augustin Thierry, in his *Considerations on the History of France*, has cited the charter of Guise, but he has only seen in the singular clause we have referred to, a curious example of the hatred and apprehension which for a long time attached themselves to the name of commune.† This explanation is evidently insufficient. Why this hatred attached to the name only? It was the thing which the enemies of burgherism detested. And why? Because the commune answered, not to ideas of municipal power, to elections, to the rural magistracy, but to ideas of revolts, of passionate strifes, of war.

Lyons has had, from time immemorial, a municipal body, and the origin of it dates back from the Roman emperors. Now, the Parliament in 1273, made the following decree: "Lyons having never had either university or commune."‡ In the eyes of the authors of this decree, then, municipality and commune were perfectly distinct things.

That the word *commune* has been extended since its origin to cities fortunate enough to obtain, peaceably, charters framed on those which neighboring cities had obtained sword in hand; that by one of those alterations, so frequent in the history of languages, the word *commune*

* Yvon: Carnot. Epistole, p. 446.

† Considerations sur l'histoire de France, chap. 5. p. 295.

‡ M. de Brequigny in his preface to the sixth volume of the *Recueil des Ordonnances* has cited the fact without deducing its consequence.

has been gradually diverted from its proper and primitive signification ; finally, that it has owed to its modern signification its definite replacement of the expression *municipality*, which is wholly Roman, we can conceive. But it is no less true, that to comprehend the communes well, to unravel their special character, to know their historical mission, we must interrogate, above all else, writers cotemporaneous with their establishment and the charters in which all the constitutive titles of their existence are assembled.

Thus from the sixteenth century, the period, as we shall hereafter see, in which feudality fell into complete decay, the word *commune* ceases to be employed, and is replaced by the word *communality*, until 1789, when it was resumed and defined as follows : " French citizens, considered in regard to the local relations which spring from their union in cities and in certain rural districts form *communes*."

M. Raynouard has written a book upon *municipal rights*. He has followed them with a patient and sincere curiosity through the darkness of the first ages of our history, traces them from the municipal regime of the Romans ; and as he found even in the twelfth century vestiges of ancient municipalities, he has carried back the filiation of the French communes beyond the invasion of the barbarians, despising thus every thing that the communal movement had, that was spontaneous, original, and if we may say so, indigenous.

After him, came M. Augustin Thierry, who, struck with the spectacle of the great struggles sustained by the cities of the middle ages, has thought himself able to refer the whole existence of burgherism to these struggles, and has given the insurrection as a point of departure to that which he calls a sure organization of the municipal government of the cities. A manifest error, since, in general, wherever we see a commune establish itself tumultuously, it had already a mayor and sheriffs, an inheritance which Roman society had bequeathed to the cities of the Gauls.

Thus, from not having made the distinction we have pointed out, both Messieurs Raynouard and Thierry appear to us to have committed, in an inverse sense, two equally grave errors. One has said of the communes, that which was only true of the municipalities ; the other of the municipalities, that which was only true of the communes.

Yes, the communal association was the warlike phase in the existence of burgherism, it was that alone. And every thing proves it ; the circumstances of the decline of the communes, as well as of the laws of their formation.

For at what period did they commence to be weakened, were they extinguished ? At what period did those laboriously acquired charters disappear ? Precisely at that in which the feudality, from which they had been wrested, allowed itself to be disarmed by the kings and sank of its own weight.

M. Guizot has been too absolute when he confined the feudal period between the tenth and the fourteenth centuries. " See," exclaims Montaigne, speaking of feudality in the sixteenth century, " see in the pro-

vinces distant from the court, Brittany for example, the train, the subjects, the officers, the occupations, the service and ceremony of a retired and domestic lord, dwelling among his vassals, and see also the flight of his imagination; there is nothing more royal; he is heard to speak of his master once a year, as of a king of Persia, and only recognizes him through some old relationships of which his secretary keeps a register."

Feudality was not then without its splendor, even in the times of Montaigne. We must admit, however, that the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries formed the most brilliant part of the feudal history. There was no longer that frightful confusion which broke out under the successors of Charlemagne, and there was not yet that symmetrical order which the omnipotence of royalty was afterwards to found. It is from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries that the hierarchy of fiefs was definitely constituted. From those strong castles, built on mountains which ravines and precipices bound, spring forth incessantly bold men, greedy of booty, impatient of repose, and whose ardor no human power has yet the right to enchain, nor whose violences to prevent. War is everywhere; ramparts are built around churches, ditches dug around monasteries; from one end of France to the other feudality is seen on horseback and armed.

It is then at this period above all, that the communes should make their appearance in history. And this is just what they do. Parallel with this life of feudality, so active, so energetic, so brilliant even in its excesses and its robberies, history shows us the existence of communes, as strong, as free, as honored by kings as it could be. To keep in check the vagabond humor of the lords, burgher militia are established, true *permanent communes*. To watch over the maintenance of the ramparts, to provide for the defence of the city, became the first obligation of the municipal officers. The mayor had all the rights of command; the care of the fortifications was confided to him; the keys of the city were deposited in his hands. Companies of archers and cross-bow men were formed everywhere, and gunpowder was no sooner invented than companies of arquebuseirs increased the ranks of these small burgher armies. What was then done to excite the military spirit among these citizen soldiers? Now, the right to wear the livery of the king was granted to them; now exemptions from impost, as was done in the fifteenth century for the cross-bowmen of Paris and Rouen; and again festivals were instituted, having for their especial object the encouragement, by honorary denominations, such as the *King of the Arquebuse*, the *King of the Cross-Bow*, of the Burghers who took part in warlike exercises.

Thus, from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries, the military feudality found its counterpoise in the military organization of burgherism, or in the communes. When now the first of these two forces succumbed, the other should not be long in perishing from want of employment. It was just what happened.

Let us go back to the end of the thirteenth century. Feudality already began to decline; all its strength had consisted in its military independence, but in 1296, Philip the Handsome made an ordinance by which

he interdicted all private wars, *as long as his own war lasted*. "*Statuit quod, durante guerra sua, nulla alia guerra fiat in regno.*" Here then is the right of war restrained for the advantage of the crown. In 1314, the prohibition laid by Philip the Handsome is renewed, and in 1353, appeared an ordinance of King John, which prohibits all private wars under the severest penalties. Feudality is disarmed.

Thus it is from this time that the communes disappear from history ; so long as feudality had threatened the cities from its lofty donjons, they had been compelled to remain in arms ; and they had had *communes*. The danger having ceased, they could allow the child who had been placed in the tower of the church to announce the approach of the enemy to come down ; they were now but *municipalities*.

Thus is naturally explained what historians have called the fall of the communes in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. As soon as they ceased to think that it was important for them to live, they died. There were some of them which, tired of paying the annual tax, the price of the charter sold to them by the cupidity of the kings, asked to be delivered from the communal rights, as from a burthen. The city of Soissons did this in 1325. Other cities, it is true, resigned themselves less easily to the abolition of an order of things which recalled to them glorious recollections ; but the resistance was neither general, nor earnest. The disappearance of the communes was not, to speak properly, but the voluntary disarming of burgherism.

Things had reached such a point towards the middle of the fifteenth century, that Charles the Seventh could at a single blow, and without encountering any obstacles, seize on the military power of burgherism by the creation of *Archers*, and on that of feudality by the creation of *Free-Companies*. It was an immense revolution, but it had been a long time prepared. Burgherism could not murmur at it, for if it had drawn the sword, it was only because the possessors of fiefs held one continually stretched out over its head ; now that it had no more to fear from brutal aggression, why should it not abandon itself entirely to those peaceful labors which were to be the foundation of its preponderance ? The nobility alone might have complained ; but it had no longer vigor or youth. It had torn out its own entrails with its own hands in the internal struggles which the establishment of the communes had provoked. Foreign wars had added to this exhaustion, the bitter fruit of civil discords, and it had lost its purest blood in the fatal plains of Cressy, Poitiers and Azincourt. No voice then was raised to prevent Charles the Seventh from breaking down all the military past of France. Feudality still preserved its splendor, but it was deprived of its real strength. France was no longer, if we may say so, but a sword, and that sword was placed in the hands of the king. There were no more bannerets obliged to bring to the field fifty men-at-arms, proudly displaying their independent banner. No more batchelors with their modest penons floating around the banner. The organization of the armed feudality was struck to the heart, and all soon bent beneath the laws of military unity.

This immense concentration of the material forces of society in the

hands of one man, was chiefly the work of the communes. At first, by taking from the nobles the exclusive right of declaring war, they broke the strongest privilege which could serve as a basis for oppression; then they were the occasion of and furnished the pretext for a crowd of small wars, which, without the communes, would never have broken out in the bosom of feudality, and which brought into play all the elements of disorder that it contained.

What the communes had done for the ruin of the material authority of the conquerors of Gaul, the ennoblements did for the ruin of their moral authority. Fiefs do not ennoble without the consent of the prince, says La Roque in his *Treatise on the Nobility*, nobility emanating from the sovereign authority as rivers emanate from the sea.

The ordinance of Blois provides, Article 258, that "plebeians purchasing noble fiefs are not raised thereby to the rank of nobles." From whence it follows, that nobility unable to recruit itself from itself, its splendor must sooner or later be lost in that of royalty.

What was needed to take its prestige from the nobility? To ennoble plebeians, kings could, and thanks to God, did use this right freely.

Was Philip the First, as has been maintained, the first of our kings who granted letters of nobility? Is it true he used this right in favor of Eudes le Maire, who wished to execute for his majesty the vow he had made of going to Jerusalem to visit the holy sepulchre? De la Roque regards it as very doubtful.

Be it as it may, ennoblements were very rare at the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth century. Three are cited under Philip the Handsome, one under Louis the Tenth, four under Philip the Long, five under Philip of Valois.

In proportion as feudality declined, the number of ennoblements increased. After those by letters, came those by edicts. In 1564, Charles the Ninth created twelve nobles, in 1568, he created thirty; Henry the Third will go still further; by his edict of 1596, followed by several different declarations, he will create not less than a thousand nobles,—and in this path, royalty was no longer to stop.

But what contributed to the moral decline of the offspring of the conquering race, was the ennobling the cities, which coincides with the material weakening of the feudality. After Charles the Fifth, who granted nobility to the mayors, sheriffs, or peers of Poitiers, La Rochelle, Saint Jean d'Angely and Angouleme, will appear Louis the Eleventh, that strong and royal head granted by Providence to burgherism, and through him will become ennobled in the persons of their magistrates, the cities of Tours, Niort, Cognac, Bourges and Angers.

What a terrible blow was the ennobling City Halls to the prestige of great names. You are now not astonished, if afterwards, you hear the burgher writers of the eighteenth century, repeating in chorus those words of Claude d'Expilly. "Gentlemen have not fallen from heaven; and there is no one, who, were he to trace it to its source, would not find his family higher than that of the nobility."

The ennoblements continued the work begun by the communes, and feudality having lost its sword, could not long preserve its aureole.

In the letters or edicts of ennoblement, most of the kings saw but a financial resource. As far back as 1354, it cost Jean de Rheims thirty gold crowns to become a noble, and in the following year Aimeny de Cours paid eighty gold crowns for the right of forgetting his origin.

Burgherism had not however attained a high degree of opulence in the fourteenth century. When afterwards, by the developments of industry, it had acquired that great wealth which ended in giving to it the government of society, kings were not content with selling nobility to plebeians: they forced them to buy it, and went so far as to make out letters of nobility with the name in blank! So much cupidity must destroy them, and the weakening of the nobility led to that of the throne.

Be that as it may, the writers who have attributed the destruction of feudality to the political sagacity of the kings, have fallen into a strange error. That protection which the kings granted to the communes, those ennobling letters by which burgherism was gradually raised to the level of nobility, were usually but means of raising money. The feudal principle was conquered directly, not only by the monarchical principle, as has been so often said and repeated, but also by the communal principle.

Unfortunately, the burghers were no sooner sure of their victory, than every thing changed in the internal government of the cities. As they had only taken up arms to defend themselves, as it was by industry and not by war that their strength was called to develop itself, they plunged entirely into purely commercial pursuits. Not only did the use of arms disappear, but they even lost a taste for public life. They felt the necessity of it less forcibly; they dreaded its storms. They feared lest those below them should in their turn profit by the power of agitation. Then was born that love for order which now characterizes burgherism, an unquiet love which has also its transports and violences. The traditions of the Hotel de Ville were forgotten or disdained; the bell of the assemblies remained mute in the belfry; every heroic feeling ceased in their souls, and soon, where communes had been, there were but municipalities.

Behold, then, how burgherism developed itself in the social order.

Organized militarily by the communes, it disputes material power with the feudality; enriched by labor, it opens its purse to kings, and by letters of nobility which it purchases, it despoils nobility of a part of its splendor.

Returned, by the disarming of feudality, to pacific and fruitful labors, it gives to its genius in industrial pursuits the wings of the vulture and seizes irresistibly on space. Everything then is serviceable to it, everything is for its profit; that which it appears to lose, as well as that it gains; and from its apparent defeats, it gains real and great conquests.

When, however, feudality shall have entirely succumbed, it will not be burgherism that shall immediately receive the heritage, it will be the kings. But patience; the logic of history will finish correctly. When the philosophers of burgherism shall have finished their work, a revolution will break out, and on the morrow, by the side of a cast down throne, we shall find burgherism erect.

CHAPTER II.

PROGRESS OF BURGERISM.

THE STATES GENERAL.

Burgherism in the States General—The people called but excluded—What the States General did ; what they represented—History of Marcel—The *Jacquerie*—The States General assure the future triumph of Burgherism over Royalty.

AN immense revolution was made during the reign of Philip the Handsome ; burgherism rises, feudality declines.

What ruins are heaped up in the space of a few years. It is no longer only a question of the papacy which the iron gauntlet of Colonna strikes in the face, nor of the clergy, which the king admits to ransom in humbling it, nor of those bishops, to whom the doorkeepers of parliament can say, with a royal* ordinance in their hands, "you shall not enter here." By the side of the religious power, which is decaying, feudality dies, and with it all the middle ages possessed of strength and poetry. In what consisted the military genius of feudality ? Was it in the art of encampment, or in the science of sieges, or in skilfully combined manœuvres, or in the strict observance of the laws of discipline ? It was enough for nobles to be brave, to know how to ride on horseback and handle the lance. Military feudality repulsed, by its very nature, the system of great armies and distant expeditions. The seas of blood uselessly shed in the crusades had but too cruelly proved this. Now up to the time of Philip the Handsome, with the exception of the crusades, the active life of feudality was made up of a series of small civil wars. But extending the regulations of Saint Louis, which had never been observed, Philip the Handsome suddenly interdicted private wars ; a decisive innovation, for from being feudal, wars were to become national, and the transformation will be so rapid, that under Philip the Long, the knight banneret will not blush to receive, to ask for, a payment of twenty sols a day.† They must fight no longer, hand to hand, but in great masses ; those intrepid and undisciplined horsemen must mingle with Flemish infantry and mercenaries from across the channel. Was not that a certain cause of ruin to feudality ?

Thus what do we see already ? Under Philip the Handsome thousands of gentlemen hasten to pile themselves up in a muddy ditch at Contray, and perish, beaten to death by the leaden mallets of the weavers of Bruges, whilst their heirs die at Cressy, beneath the knives of the mountaineers of Wales, and at Poitiers, by the arrows of the English archers.

Feudality is decimated.

Up to the time of Philip the Handsome seignorial jurisdictions had

* Ordonn. I. p. 316.

† Ordonn. II. p. 120, et suiv.

been respected, if not regarded as inviolable, and the great principle of the inalienability of real estate had been but feebly shaken by the ordinance of Philip the Hardy, relative to the acquisition of feudal things by those who were *not noble*. But under Philip the Handsome, there were spread through the whole kingdom, seneschals, bailiffs, attorneys, instructed to interfere between the noble creditor and the plebeian debtor. The dismemberment of feudal property is about to commence. The nobility of the robe rises in opposition to that of the sword, and to use the language of the Marquis of Mirabeau, "dates the gentle conquest of the province by the ink-stand."

It is feudality which is despoiled.

Until the time of Philip the Handsome, the order of the Templars had remained erect; and that was an institution eminently feudal. To fight and to pray, to carry the cross and the sword, to unite, in a poetical and touching mixture, the valor of the knight to the austerity of the monk and the enthusiasm of the pilgrim, was, as all know, the mission of the Templar. The Temple was then at once the most elevated and the strongest expression of feudality. It represented it under its double aspect; spirit and matter, the priest and the warrior. That corruption had penetrated into the bosom of this famous free masonry; that these armed Jesuits had gradually descended from the heights of mysticism to gross superstitions, and from an exaltation too arid to nameless pleasures; that they had denied Christ and spit upon the cross in revels whose impurity darkness covered, is still a secret for history. Until Philip the Handsome, their vices had always been obscure, their virtues shining; now behold this prince causing them to be ignominiously condemned by priests to what the lawyers prompt. Funeral pyres were lighted for the most illustrious of them.

It is feudality which is degraded.

And we may remark, that at the bottom of all the measures pursued in this reign we find but one thing—a want of money.

If Philip the Handsome taught kings to break the yoke of the papacy, it was because in his bull, *clericis laicos*, Boniface the Eighth was unwilling that an imposition should be laid on the clergy.

If he prohibited private wars, it was because war among the nobles was but pillage, devastations, and in the midst of these incessant robberies all levies of taxes were impossible.

If he established a beginning of administrative centralization in France, it was because, without unity in the administration, the treasury would never be filled.

If he destroyed the order of the Templars, it was because that order was extremely rich, that it owned nine thousand manors, that it had brought from the Holy Land more gold than ten mules* could carry, and that it was therefore an immense prey to devour.

And what is the life of Philip the Handsome, if not a grasping and shameful search after all means of getting money? Now he protects the

* See what is said about the wealth of the Templars, the 3d vol., by M. Michelet, of his *Histoire de France*. He appears to have understood well the historical character of the reign of Philip the Handsome.

Jews, and gives them the poor to despoil; now he drives them away to seize on the fruit of their rapines. He sports with bankruptcy; he alters the coin. Under his rapacious and insatiable soul, to govern a kingdom means to pillage it. Under such a prince, and when all matters of business are governed by a necessity for money, could burgherism do otherwise than increase in strength and importance? Besides, as every thing is serviceable to it, so every thing appears to call it on the scene. Was it not for it that the mariner's compass was perfected, that bills of exchange were invented, and circulation rendered rapid? Look around the throne. It is no longer gentlemen who surround it, but advocates, bankers, Lombards, greedy financiers hastening from Florence; the Plasians, the Nogarèts, the Musciatos, an aristocracy of lawyers and money lenders.

Philip the Handsome is then essentially a burgher king. It is he also who founded the political power of burgherism. Not content with instituting the parliament, he introduced the third estate into the management of great affairs. The States General open with the fourteenth century.

Before examining what was to be the bearing of this political association, established by Philip the Handsome, between the third estate and the two other orders in the nation, it is important to know what was the third estate. Was it the people, the whole people?

At first deputies from the country, that is, deputies from two-thirds of the nation were not admitted to the States General until the regency of Madame de Beaujeu, in 1484. Until that time, the ordinances of convocation, which have been preserved for us, speak only of the deputies of the good cities.*

From 1484 the admission of the country deputies became an incontestable fact,† and we may add that no one, except in Paris, was excluded from the electoral assemblies.

* We read in the proceedings of the deliberations of the Estates, in 1356,—“They went to the Cordeliers in Paris each in his order, that is, the clergy together, and the nobles together, and the good cities together.” *Bibliothèque du roi*, 1035.

† The learned M. Monteil says, in *l'Histoire des Français des divers Etats*, that even in the year 1789, the inhabitants of the country had not been represented. He brings striking proofs in support of his opinion. The authority of the following proceedings appears to us imposing. “On Sunday, the 6th of July, 1814, in the gallery of the church of the ‘said Nouzillay, at the end of the first mass, at which are usually the largest assemblies of the inhabitants thereof, before us, the said baillif, appeared the said inhabitants of Nouzillay in great numbers, who having to-day heard, at the close of mass, the reading of the letters to his majesty, for the purpose of setting forth and representing a list of their remonstrances, on the 14th day of this month, at nine o'clock in the morning, before the lieutenant-general, for which purpose they have named the persons to whom and to each of them, in the absence of the others, they have given power, authority and a special mandate to present their edict of said complaints in said assembly,” etc. (*Greffé du bailliage de Touraine*.)

This electoral right of the inhabitants of villages is proved by a number of analogous proceedings, among which we will cite that of the Judge of Spoy, register of the bailiwick of Troyes; that of the notary of Chabargue, register of the bailiwick of Touraine; that of the notary Perreway, register of the bailiwick of Tours.

All these proceedings refer to the States General of 1814; but we could cite much older pieces, and for example, the resolution of the village of Blaigny, dated in 1576, and to which we shall recur again.

Besides, we have not spoken here of these proceedings but to prove the exercise of the electoral right by the villages; for the recognition of the principle, goes back to the very origin of our history.

It was universal suffrage, if not in all its sincerity, at least in all its pomp. When it pleased the king, for the holding of the States General depended on his good pleasure, to invoke the assistance of the three orders, he addressed letters of convocation to the bailiffs and seneschals. The latter sent copies to the judges of the second order, who in their turn transmitted the royal will to the curates and church-wardens of the parishes. Still further; all means of publicity were employed; publication by the sound of the trumpet, and placards in the cities;* publications after high mass on Sundays in the villages.† It was, I repeat, universal suffrage.

But were the people the better represented for that? Certainly not; and to convince ourselves of this, it is only necessary to see in what the electoral mechanism of the third estate consisted.

The inhabitants of the villages met on the appointed day, under the porch of the gallery of the church. They chose some of their number to draw up their complaints or remonstrances; these were called *cahiers*; they then appointed deputies to carry these cahiers, not to the assembly of the States General, not even to that of the principal bailiwicks; but to the assembly of the bailiffs of the second order.‡ There all these village cahiers were compiled and united into one, and the deputies from the villages appointed other deputies to the assembly of the principal bailiwick. Here was a fresh compilation of cahiers; new deputies were appointed for the general assembly of the states. Thus the election was three removes|| from the inhabitants of the villages, and their complaints did not reach the foot of the throne until they had undergone two successive alterations.

In the principal cities matters were transacted as follows. Each com-

* "It is ordered, on request of the king's attorney, that the letters presently read should be enrolled in the registry of the court, in order that recourse may be had to them there whenever it is needed, and that they should be published in the highways, cantons and other places, where publications are usually made, so that no one may pretend ignorance." (Sentence of the Lieutenant-general of Poitiers, 21st July, 1688. Registry of the Bailiwick of Poitiers.)

† See above the *procès-verbal* of the Judge of Nouzillay.

‡ Behold a *procès-verbal* of the bailiffs of Chatillon-sur Indre, which furnishes at once the proof and the example of these formalities.

"And now this day, Saturday, the 28th of June, 1614, before us, Jean de Puymmarret, Lord of La Barre, ordinary lieutenant to M. the Bailiff of Touraine, at the royal seat of Chatillon sur Indre, appeared in person, M. Louis Gaulin, a royal notary, who handed us a paper subscribed—which having been opened by us, we found it to be a missive by which we are commanded to send seven copies of the ordinance and mandate of the king our master, for the convocation of the three estates in the city of Sens; upon which we have commanded the king's council to take order on the execution of the said mandate and convocation, and upon the ordinance from the presidial seat, and we have sent two of the said copies, one to M. Jean Bonneau, prior priest of the church of that city, and the other to M. Antoine Fournin, prior of the other church of that city, that the said Bonneau and Fournin should publish it in the said parishes of Toizelay and St. Martin, on to-morrow, Sunday, in the sermons, at the conclusion of the parochial masses which shall be there celebrated, so that the service of the king be not deferred, etc." (Registry of the Bailiwick of Tours.)

§ In the seneschalships of Toulouse and Carcassonne, the assemblies of the second order were not held by bailiwicks but by dioceses. This results from the *procès-verbal* of the Consular-house of Alby, 18th August, 1614. (Registry of the Seneschalship of Toulouse.)

|| See the *procès-verbal* of the city and bailiwick of Troyes. (Registry of the Bailiwick of Troyes, 1560.)

munity of arts and trades, each corps in the city chose representatives. Each parish in the city did the same. These deputies, having assembled at the Hotel de Ville, appointed others, who went to the assembly of the principal bailiwick to appoint still others. We can judge of the overhauling of the cahiers.

Paris was the only city in France which enjoyed the benefit of direct election. But in return, all the inhabitants were not permitted, even indirectly, to be a part of the assembly, by which the deputies were chosen. Do you know of what this assembly, which met at the Hotel de Ville, under the presidency of the prevost of the merchants, consisted? Of the sheriffs and counsellors of the city, of the bishop, when he took a fancy to be present, of deputies from the chapter of Notre Dame, and other ecclesiastical communities, of the wardens and masters of merchandize and trades, of the quartiniers, and the ten notables chosen by *them* in each quarter.* I ask, if an assembly, thus formed, could be regarded as a representation of the people of Paris? Did it not constitute a true burgher oligarchy? And is it not evident, that in all these strange combinations, Paris was worse treated than the smallest village in the kingdom? Of a truth, since 1576, a box had been placed in the hall, called *the great bureau of the city*, to receive the memorials, observations and notes of all the citizens.† But of what use was the political value of such a formality?

It requires but little reflection on the nature of the mechanism I have rapidly described to understand, that it tended to concentrate gradually all political power in the hands of burgherism. And if this concentration had been rendered stronger at Paris than elsewhere, to what did it owe it, if not to the fears inspired in Parisian burgherism by the crowd below it, a crowd menacing even in its silence, powerful even in its inertness?

No, the people who groaned in the cities and in the country were not really represented in the States General. Burgherism alone, under the lying name of the third estate, had its place in them by the side of the nobility and the clergy.

This laid down, two things are to be considered in the history of the States General; the right and the fact, the principle and the application.

As the declaration of a right, as the representation of a principle, the importance of the States General was very great. We have but to recall the circumstances which led to their convocation at different periods of our history.

In 1302, a great quarrel broke out between the court of Rome and the King of France; it was the greatest question which could agitate christendom; it concerned the temporal power of the popes, the independence of crowns. Who shall resolve this formidable question so boldly laid down before the world by Gregory the Seventh? Between Boniface the Eighth, saying in his bull *ausculta, fili*, "God has appointed us, though indirectly, above kings and kingdoms," and Philip the Hand-

* See the proces-verbal of the assembly of the city of Paris, 14th of June, 1614, and the following days. (Hotel de Ville de Paris, Anno 1614. MS. Abbaye Saint Germain.)

† Hotel de Ville de Paris, annéé, 1576. MS. Talon.

some, rejecting, by the mouth of his counsellors, the temporal suzerainty of Rome, who shall decide? The States General were convened.

In 1328, the crown of France was suspended between Edward the Third and Philip of Valois, both claiming to be lawful heirs. The States General were convened.*

In 1356, John is conquered at Poitiers. There is no longer a king on the throne, although he is living. By whom shall the kingdom be governed? The States General are convened.

In 1380, the throne is occupied by a child; all is anarchy through the kingdom; the four uncles of the king are occupied in tearing the authority from each other by shreds. On one side robberies, on the other revolt. How to escape from this frightful confusion? The States General are convened.

In 1484, the government of France and the tutelage of a minor king are disputed with Madame de Beaujeu by the first prince of the blood. Who shall settle this great quarrel? The States General are convened.

In 1576 and 1588, the throne is occupied by a kind of phantom, concealing his life by turns in the shades of the confessional and in the darkness of a doubly soiled alcove, an impure bigot, who prostitutes his body to his minions and his soul to his priests. By his side, agitating the kingdom with all the furies of religion in delirium, Guise le Balafé carves a path towards the throne, in which the blood of Protestants, mingled with that of Catholics, flows in floods. Already does the sister of this powerful mayor of the palace, wear at her girdle the golden scissors which are to shear the heir of these slothful kings. But for this purpose it was required that the edict of tolerance should be abolished, that the famous act of union of the Catholics should receive a solemn consecration, that the King of Navarre should be proscribed, and, as it were, deposed in advance. Guise dared not attempt all those things, notwithstanding his audacity. He convened the States General.

Finally, when in 1614, they are again convened, it is at the close of a civil war which has placed the royal power in litigation. This convocation was imposed by the Prince of Condé on Mary of Medicis, by the treaty of Sainte Menehould, in the hope of ruling the states, and through the states, the court, and through the court, the kingdom.

Is it necessary for me to say more to prove how great, at least, in right, was the importance of the States General? They had resource to them when the throne was vacant, or when the kingdom was in danger; they were called upon to resolve all fundamental questions. Whether they exercised the sovereignty or not, they decided upon it.

Moreover, what was the language of the kings in their ordinances of convocation?† They recognized so well the sovereignty of the states that in several ordinances is found this remarkable formulary:‡ "Assur-

* This is not gathered from the great Chronicles of St. Denis, nor from Froissard's Chronicles. But Jean de Montrouil, who wrote during the reigns of Charles the Fifth and Charles the Sixth, affirms that the States General were held on this occasion. This also affirms (*Chronique des Etats Generaux*) Savaron, after Papon, and one of the continuers of William of Nangis.

† See the letter of Philip the Long to the inhabitants of Narbonne; a letter from the king to the second States of Blois, 31st May, 1588. Fontanon, t. 4. fol. 728; letter from the king to the States at Sens, 7th June, 1614, (Registry of the Bailiwick of Sens.)

‡ Ibid.

ing them that on our part they will find all good will and affection to cause to be followed, observed and executed entirely whatever shall be resolved upon of all that shall be proposed and advised to the said states, in order that each in his place may receive and enjoy the fruits that can and ought to spring from so excellent and notable an assembly."

Now did the fact respond to the right? Did the reality agree with appearances?

On the day appointed by the letters of convocation, the deputies of the three orders met in the city indicated by these same letters; and before all else, as we learn from the traditions of the sixteenth century, a procession took place which opened a career to all the vanities of caste. The deputies attended mass devotedly, communed and then fasted for some days. The opening of the session then took place, in which, after a discourse from the chancellor, the orators of the three orders set forth successively the treasures of a ridiculous erudition. This done, each order retired separately; the clergy into some church, the nobles to some chateau, the third estate to the Hotel de Ville.

There each order was occupied in drawing up its complaints or its cahier. A new general assembly, in which, through their respective orators, the clergy recriminated against the nobility and third estate, the nobility against the clergy and third estate, and the third estate against the nobility and clergy. The powers of the three orders ended with the presentation of the cahiers. Vain formality! for the court did not consider itself obliged to examine into the complaints submitted to them. In the assembly held at Blois in 1588, the orator of the third estate said bitterly: "The assembly of the states took place in 1576. The cahier compiled and presented by the three orders was not examined until three or four years after."

Such was the way in which they treated these loud complaints at the court. Sometimes, however, they gave birth to an ordinance, but this ordinance was always drawn up to suit the interests or the fancies of the monarch. It must still be registered by the parliament.

There was also no regularity, no uniformity in the mechanism of this strange institution. The number of deputies, for example, varied in the most singular way; at the meeting in 1614, there were but four hundred and fifty-four deputies, whilst under King John, when the kingdom was much less extensive, eight hundred met. By the side of one seneschal's jurisdiction which sent three deputies, were others which sent four, five, and as many as ten. I do not speak of that year, 1356, in which the States General sitting in Paris, refused sternly to grant to the Dauphin that which the other *States General*, sitting at Toulouse, granted to him cheerfully; this strange dualism is easily explained by the separation then existing between the provinces of the language d'oïl and those of the language d'oc, (the north and the south.) But even without going back to those periods full of disorder, confusion and darkness, who can find in the States General, such as memory has transmitted them to us, the trace of a true political institution?

If these assemblies had had any real strength, would it not have displayed itself in these horrible times, in which authority was needed everywhere and was nowhere?

But it is especially in difficult situations, that the life of the States General was languishing and sterile. Take for example the crisis which followed the disaster of Poitiers. That is, of all the periods of our history, the one which has been the least understood and deserves to be the most studied.

After the battle of Poitiers, the States General assembled at Paris; the king was absent; he was a captive; the power was in the hands of a pale young man of nineteen, who had neither the graces nor the verdure of youth, for whom the lance was too heavy a weight, and whose *long visage* was displeasing to the people. The opportunity was certainly an excellent one to essay an act of power. It in fact did make a momentary attempt to rule, and it might have been thought there was some vitality in it, when it was seen to reprimand the Dauphin, proscribe the most perverse of his councillors, and impose on him a new council formed of twelve prelates, twelve nobles and twelve burghers. The Dauphin attempted to strive in vain, and finally found some futile pretext to dismiss the assembly; three months afterwards, he was obliged to recall them and submit. But how are those deceived who have attributed to the States General the honor of this rapid victory? The States General at this period lived in a man. This man was Marcel, the hero of an anticipated 93, the true Danton of the fourteenth century. Froissard has preserved a phrase for us, which shows how great was the power of this prevost of the merchants. One day when he ascended to the apartments of the Dauphin, to strike down there, beneath his very eyes, two of the highest heads of the nobility, he began by telling the young prince, that it was his duty, who was to inherit the kingdom, to purge it of the bands that infested it. To which the Dauphin replied, "It is for him who has the rights and profits to have also the charge of the kingdom." The true king then was Marcel, and he immediately showed it, by putting to death the marshals of Champagne and Normandy, or still better, by putting his own hat, as if to protect him, on the head of the son of John, who, seeing drops of blood upon his robes, cried out in alarm, "Save my life." This terrible example was to be afterwards followed, and another Marcel was to cover the royal head of Louis the Sixteenth with a red cap.

What is certain is, that Marcel had conceived vast designs which were not excelled in boldness or genius by the most celebrated revolutionary leaders of 1793. He wished to centralize the political power, and never was the necessity for centralization more clearly revealed. The kingdom was covered with brigands; the villagers were flying in tears from their devastated homes; the nobles were rebels to the king, tyrants to the people; France was trampled under foot by those who should have governed or defended it. Such is the picture which the sad continuer of William of Nangis draws of these frightful times.*

Cotemporary historians agree in finding the cause of these evils in the absence of all directing power, or in other words, in the default of politi-

* "Tunc enim incēpit patria et tota terra Franciæ induere confusioem et marorem, quia non habebat defensorem in aliquo nec tutorem." Contin. Guill. de Nangis, p. 226, 227.

cal unity.* Well, this unity, at the urgency of the oppressed citizens, Marcel undertook to establish. To succeed in it, required more strength than he could draw from the commune of Paris; thanks to him, the States General were convened, and for some time he animated them with his breath, he gave them vitality by his life.† Do we wish to know what Marcel thought ought to be the power of the States General. Froissard teaches us. "Every thing should be referred to these three estates and all others, prelates, lords, communalities of towns and good cities, should obey all that the three estates shall do and order."‡

The views of Marcel are moreover perfectly developed in that immortal ordinance of 1387 which the states wrested from the Dauphin, and which was the work of the prevost of the merchants. This ordinance combatted political anarchy by the formation of a council, commissioned to watch over the squanderings of the court and to restrain all capricious tyranny; feudal anarchy, by the interference, become permanent, of the third estate in matters of business; administrative anarchy, by sending commissioners taken from the assembly into all the provinces; finally, territorial anarchy, by the preponderance assured to the city of Paris by which it was made as it were the heart and the brain of France.§ Had Charlemagne dared more? But what Charlemagne had attempted for the establishment of monarchical centralization, Marcel tried for the establishment of a democratic centralization. It was for that that he had induced them to decide, that for the future, all deliberations would be sterile without the assent of the third estate; well assured moreover that in the formidable vicinage of the commune of Paris, the influence of the third order would have soon absorbed that of the other two.

To these bold efforts the Dauphin opposed intrigue, flattering the prevost in public,|| but environing him with obstacles in private. Division was introduced into the states; the two orders declare against the third; it appears to have hastened to abdicate the power created by Marcel, and he is forced to fall back upon the commune, abandoned by all those, who in the revolution prepared by him, trembled lest they should be drawn on too far. Marcel is not discouraged; he takes the King of Navarre out of prison; he opposes him to the Dauphin; he alarms the courtiers, and to replace that collective sovereignty of the three orders, which priests and nobles do not wish, he forms, if we may say so, by his boldness and his will, a new assembly, composed entirely of his compeers of the Hotel de Ville.

Then commenced, between the Dauphin and Marcel, the same struggle, which at the close of the eighteenth century broke out between the Girondists and the Mountain. The sons of John left Paris to excite in

* Froissard says, in speaking of the three sons of the captive of Poitiers: "They were very young in age and counsel. If it had been in the power of these little ones to recover it, none of them would have wished to undertake the government of the kingdom of France." Vol. 1. chap. 170. p. 182.

† "*Ipsam plures adierunt exorantes.*" Cont. Guill. de Nangis, p. 228.

‡ Froissard, vol. 1. chap. 170. p. 183.

§ See articles 6, 7, 23, 26 and 39 of this remarkable ordinance.

|| "So the duke dissimulated before the prevost and some of Paris," Froissard, vol. i. chap. 180, p. 189.

the states of Normandy and Vermandois, the provinces against Paris. Strange thing! It is the royalist power which calls to its aid the federal spirit; it is the monarchy, which in the person of the Dauphin, dares to arm itself against unity. Impious war; for it was from the anarchy it caused that the Jacquerie sprang. What would those unfortunate peasants do, whose domains they pillaged, whose wives and daughters they dishonored, whom they murdered like vile flocks, and who had neither aid nor protection against the nobles transformed into brigands? They were for a long time resigned, and this resignation was such, that the nobles made them an object of sarcasm, calling these unfortunates *Jacques bon-homme*,* and these dug for themselves dwellings in the earth and there awaited in filth and darkness the visit of famine, less dreaded than that of their oppressors. It is related, that the inhabitants of the banks of the Loire passed their days in boats on the river, finding less security in living upon the shores than on the river. But the time came when so much patience was exhausted and converted into rage. Pale and furious they rose one day, vengeance in their hearts and blasphemy in their mouths. There was a horrible butchery of the nobles, until they, having recovered from their surprise, united in their turn. And then the extermination continued inversely. "There was no necessity," says the Continuer of William de Nanges, "for the English to leave their own country to destroy ours. The English who were the mortal enemies of the kingdom could not have done more for its ruin, than did the nobles who were born in it."†

It is to be remarked that, in these circumstances Marcel took the part of the *jacques* to whom he sent assistance; whilst the King of Navarre, on the contrary, placed himself at the head of the nobles to massacre the peasants. How had it happened that this disagreement has escaped the historians who have reproached Marcel for his alliance with the King of Navarre? Marcel had only allied himself with the king to use the ambition of that prince against the Dauphin. Attacked on all sides, the commune of Paris counted on Charles the Bad as a man, who had been loyal and faithful, might have been enabled to protect it efficaciously against the nobility.‡ This is the whole secret of this alliance. It was necessary, and what was there in it shameful? Marcel was so little subservient to the passions of the King of Navarre, that after having had him made Captain of Paris, he did not hesitate to deprive him of these functions, as soon as he discovered that this prince was leaning to the cause of the nobles.§ The Dauphin, however, menaced the capital. Marcel prepared for a vigorous defence. He dug ditches, raised ramparts. Monasteries, convents, churches, which hindered the completion

* "Tunc temporis nobiles derisiones de rusticis et simplicibus tacientes, vocabant eos *Jacques bon homme*. Truphati et spreti ab aliis hoc nomen *Jacques bon homme* accesserunt et rustici perdidierunt nomen." Cont. Guill. de Nangis, p. 223.

† "Non oportebat per destruendam patriam Anglicos accedere inimicos, etc." Cont. Guill. de Nangis, p. 241.

‡ Credebant enim Parisienses ab ipso et a suis contra ducem regentem et nobiles optime defensari." Cont. Guill. de Nangis, p. 236.

This testimony is confirmed by that of Froissard, vol. i. chap. 170, p. 183.

§ Quod quia nobilis erat, cum aliis conspirasset. Cont. Guill. de Nangis, p. 237.

of the work, were pulled down without pity. The workmen labored night and day. Paris was soon in a state to sustain a siege, an immense service rendered to the kingdom, and which Froissard, notwithstanding his love for the nobles, does not hesitate to recognize.*

But the nobles appear to have sworn in their hearts the ruin of the capital. Taking post at Corbeil, they controlled the course of the Seine and starved Paris. The Dauphin appeared at St. Denis with three thousand infantry, the King of Navarre, at Charenton, ravaged the country with his cavalry. What could the provost of the merchants do against so many obstacles and dangers? Paris was stifling within its walls; must it open its gates to the nobility and Dauphin, lose the fruits of so many efforts, abandon the cause of the people? But one method of escaping from these extremities remained; to have recourse to the King of Navarre, to tame the Dauphin through him, and afterwards to break the instrument if it became dangerous. It was what Marcel attempted and what his enemies looked for. The high Parisian burgherism had not seen, without resentment, its repose so troubled and its security compromised. It determined to overthrow Marcel, and not daring to attack his popularity in front, it conspired basely against him.† It is known that he was killed by a blow with an axe near the gate St. Antoine, under the pretext that he wished to deliver up the city to Charles the Bad. Now hear what Froissard says. "On the night in which this was to happen, God inspired some of the burghers of Paris, who had always been friendly to the duke, to wit: Jean Maillard, Simo his brother, and several others, who, through divine inspiration, (we must suppose) were informed that Paris was to be overrun and destroyed."‡

It results from this recital, 1st, that Maillard and his party conspired against Marcel in favor of the Dauphin, with whom they were in intercourse; and 2dly, that the assassination of Marcel was a thing determined beforehand. For how would they have been able to know what was to transpire on this night they rendered so bloody? "By divine inspiration," says Froissard, maliciously, "we must suppose."

The recital of the Continuer of William of Nangis, is not less conclusive. "They wished," says he, speaking of the guards whom Marcel found at the gate Saint-Antoine, "they wished the proclamations to be made in the name of the Duke the Regent. The provost on the other hand, wished the name of the duke omitted."§ Hence the quarrel occurred and the provost was assassinated.

On the next day, Maillard, assembling the crowd in the markets, calumniated before it the memory of the intrepid man, whose compeer he had been, and whom he had betrayed. And the people deceived, applauded. Marcel had been murdered; he was cursed. The common destiny of all great hearts who devote themselves.

* "And I tell you this was the greatest work that any provost of the merchants has done, for before it, it had been many times and in many actions pillaged and robbed," Froissard, vol. i. chap. 183, p. 191.

† Froissard, vol. i. chap. 185, p. 194.

‡ If there had been in the city of Paris any fit men, (such as Jean Maillard, Simo his brother,) Froissard, vol. i. chap. 185, p. 192.

§ "Qui custodes volebant quod proclamationes nomine domini duces regentis fierent et propositus volebat quod nomen ducis taceretur." Cont. Guill. de Nangis, p. 244.

The Dauphin re-entered Paris as a liberator. He entered it to trample under feet that popular sovereignty which Marcel had proclaimed, and which he would have perhaps established, if the States General, which were to have served him as an instrument, had been anything else than a monstrous compound of heterogeneous elements.

We might thus follow step by step in our history the traces of the States General, and we would always find them indecisive, powerless, by turns the blind instruments of some bad prince, or the puppets of some impious faction.

What more striking proof could we give of the sterility of the institution, than that which results from the eternal repetitions in the cahiers? Read those of 1484, 1576, 1588, 1614; read them all; they are always the same complaints drawn up in the same terms.*

What was then the bearing of this institution of the States General? Hasten not to reply disdainfully. Let us not forget that if, in fact, the historical importance of the States General was almost a nullity, in right, it was immense. Now, institutions are valuable less for their application than their principle. What they express is more essential than what they produce, at least immediately.

In truth, the States General did not express the sovereignty of any of the three orders, since they were formed of an union of the three. They did not fully express the sovereignty of the people, since the people are one, and they had a multiplied character. But what matters it? They represented something powerful, something vague. They answered to a quiet force, real however, inevitable and recognized. The sovereignty of which they testified, though badly understood and badly defined, was none the less of a nature, in the opinion of all, to counterbalance at need the monarchical principle and even to subdue it. (It was a political power placed in reserve, so to speak, and only waiting to enter upon its exercise for interests capable of seizing it.) By force of rendering homage to a sovereignty independent of the throne, royalty was gradually effaced; it lost, without taking care of it, that kind of power attached to every thing that is unique. The kings said to the states, "subsidies first, reforms afterwards." A day was to come on which, reversing the phrase, the states would say, "reforms first, subsidies afterwards." On that day who could prevent bold hands from cutting out abuses by the root, and laying the axe to the monarchy itself?

We have seen how the great principle of the sovereignty of the estates was consecrated in France. It remains for us to inquire for the advantage of what class this sovereignty was naturally to be exercised.

And first it is evident that the States General could not profit either the clergy or nobility, since they furnished to the third estate and the nobility an occasion to unveil all that was false, rapinous, abusive and tyrannical.

Apart from what was fatal to the nobility in these relations, the States

* See for the states of 1484, *Le Rec. Gen. des états tenus en France*, p. 88, et suiv., and for those of 1596 the manuscript of the Abbey of St. Germain des Prés, No. 356; for those of 1588, *Le Rec. Gen. des états*, p. 61 et suiv.; for those of 1614, *le Journal de Florentin Rapine sur les états de 1614*; discourse of Miron, Prevost of the merchants.

General tended inevitably to its ruin by this alone, that they maintained a victorious competition with the provincial states, the last refuge of feudalism.

Although all historians have said so, it was not by the monarchy alone that the national unity was established. And if we are asked by what then it was done, we will reply, unhesitatingly, by the States General.

In the filiation of human affairs too much importance is usually attached to those, which we can, as it were, see and touch. Cities taken, battles gained, diplomatic negotiations accomplished in a vast sphere, the passage of a great man through the world, these are events whose influence is immediate, shining, easy to recognize and to state. But there are other influences of a superior order perhaps, slow to develop themselves, and which constitute properly the philosophy of history. I know such a principle, laid down in a badly understood legislation, which will end by producing more changes among men, than the ravages of Attila or the brilliant conquests of Alexander. The four lines, which in the code Napoleon, consecrate the division of estates, will perhaps modify more profoundly the destinies of the French people, than all the united victories of the empire have done. • The action of the States General on the affairs of the country had assuredly nothing in it that was direct or materially appreciable; but the fact alone of their existence was a something more decisive than all the efforts of royalty. By the fact alone that they made a part of the public right of the French, the States General preserved unbroken a tradition superior to all the prejudices and all the passions of locality. Their convocation, though it had taken place at periods undeterminate and remote from each other, recalled unceasingly to their minds, that above the provinces, there was a nation. • Were not the interests which agitated these great assemblies common to all parts of the country? Did not the iniquities which were denounced in them weigh equally upon the people of the north and those of the south? When Paris was the theatre of these solemn debates, had it not the right to exclaim, I am France?

The States General were to the provincial states what royalty was to the feudal power.

The States General represented the principle of unity in regard to the provinces as royalty represented it in regard to the fiefs; and as the latter were to go on, gradually losing themselves in royalty, so, from the nature of things, the provincial states were insensibly to be lost in those of the nation.

There were thus two kinds of unity prior to 1789; administrative unity and national unity.

The establishment of the first we have proved to have been the work of burgherism operating through the communes. We may judge already that the establishment of the second was the work of burgherism acting through the States General.

By the administrative unity, feudalism was driven from the fiefs; by the national unity it was to be chased from the assemblies.

It was then in the nature of things that the States General should

sooner or later become a tomb for the clergy and nobility, a pedestal for burgherism.

To sum up; we have desired to show in this chapter :

That the States General in France date from the decay of the feudal regime ;

That their importance, in right, has been very great since their origin ;

That until 1789, their importance, in fact, had been very small ;

That notwithstanding this, they carried within them, an immense revolution, on account of the principle which they represented ;

That this principle was that of the sovereignty of the assemblies ;

That the recognition of such a sovereignty could not profit either the clergy, because it was of a nature to unveil the faults and abuses of the church, or the nobility, because it rendered the existence of the provincial states, the last refuge of feudality at bay, impossible ;

That it was, consequently, to profit the people less than burgherism, which was alone admitted to a place in the States General, by the side of the nobility and clergy.

CHAPTER III.

PROGRESS OF BURGHERISM.

POLICY OF RICHELIEU.

By what terrible blows Richelieu frees Burgherism from the anarchical tyranny of the great lords—Who were to profit by the creation of the Intendancies—How Richelieu prepares for the advantage of Burgherism, the government of intellect and the ruin of absolute power.

WHEN Richelieu was called to the council, the kingdom was divided and full of troubles. Power, escaping from the feeble hands of Louis the Thirteenth, was floating about at hazard between the insufficient Condé and the queen mother, whilst the court was abandoned to a thousand intrigues, for which the public good did not form even a pretext. The Protestant party formed a kind of an aside kingdom in the state, which had its circles, its political assemblies, its strong places, Rochelle as its capital, and the most distinguished lords and captains for its military governors, as Lesdiguières, Chatillon, La Trémouille, Soubise and Rohan. The royal authority, *debased to the lowest point*,* was forced to submit to the menaces of these great lords, to purchase capitulation from some, to make war on others. The revolt had its coat of

* Testament Politique de Richelieu, chap. 1.—It is known that the Testament Politique was regarded by Voltaire as an apocryphal work. But the authenticity of it, so long contested, is no longer contestable, as M. Henri Martin has well proved in his *sauflet History of France*, vol. 12.

arms, and the reformed, agitating the south and holding the sea, dared to levy imposts and troops, by commissions granted under their great seal, "which was faith sustained by a cross, holding a book of the gospels in its hand, and trampling under foot an old skeleton which they called the Roman church."* The dilapidated finances, laden down with pensions, were in such disorder, that the Marquis d'Effiat, on entering upon his charge, said "he found the receipts expended and the expenses to pay." Of nineteen millions of taxes, only six millions reached the treasury, the rest being absorbed on its passage by the innumerable officers of finance. The people groaned under the most severe condition. Owing to the civil wars, and the absence of all central power, the nobles exercised at their ease the right of the strongest. These usurped the pasture grounds of the villages; those exacted from the peasants arbitrary jobs. Some, ruined by play and the folly of their extravagance, forced the laborer to serve them on trust;† others were permitted to levy contributions, establish new feudal services, that is mills and ovens, at which the people were obliged to grind their corn and bake their bread. Taking advantage of the want of discipline in the armies, soldiers disbanded themselves upon the march, invaded the cabin of the peasant, robbed him of his clothes and his savings, *maliciously destroyed his furniture*,‡ and unharnessing the plough of the laborer, took his horses to carry his baggage. As for burgherism, it was on the one hand cramped in its commerce by creations, unceasingly renewed, of those useless charges which it called the *gormandizing* of officers, and on the other, it had to endure, whilst awaiting its hour of vengeance, the insolent contempt of the nobility, which, at the states of 1614, was very indignant, that they dared to call the three orders of the kingdom, brethren.

Thus France presented, at the advent of Richelieu, all the symptoms of a tottering empire; anarchical administration, unpunished princes, rebellion, federalism. Unity was then the first want of France; it may be divined who were to profit by it.

But first, what are the principles of Richelieu, and what is this man? Under an amiable exterior, he veils beneath vast projects. Ambitious in gallantry, he begins by debauching two queens; he will end by speaking to them as their master; for if he has the suppleness which leads to success, he has also the boldness which gives command. A minister, he effaces the priest in himself, keeps his guards, and is seen, when he says mass, surrounded by musketeers. Disdaining trifling dangers, and embarrassments of a secondary kind, he will render the weight of government so heavy, that he alone will be enabled to carry it. He makes his sovereign his secretary; he is not loved, he is obeyed. Soon raising his personal passions, his hatreds, his jealousies, to the height of an interest in the state, he will be more than a king; he will be royalty. To sacrifice every thing to the public affairs, *is the only end of a prince and his councillors*,§ is his principle. To debase abroad the house of Austria, and at home, the party of the great revolted lords, is his end.

* *Memoires de Richelieu*, liv. 12. p. 235. t. 7. de la Collect. Michard et Poujoulat.

† *Code Michau*, art. 210.

‡ *Ibid.* art. 267.

§ *Testament Politique*, chap. 3, p. 222.

Strength, united to genius, his means. Richelieu is about to close up the Machiavelian policy imported into France by the Medicis. The astuteness of these Florentines will give place to the luminous good sense which is the very foundation of Gallic genius, and the sword will replace the dagger. But those for whom he wishes to act, should not complain, authority has sometimes violent duties. Richelieu will show himself to be terrible, never vile, baseness being useless to strength. Being certain of never striking in his enemies but those of the state, he will recoil at nothing; he will never recoil. The great will see their fortresses demolished, their conspiracies foiled, their most powerful leaders beheaded on the scaffold; and a minister, who is of them, will prepare them for civil equality, by equality before the executioner.

Such is Richelieu, and by a fortunate destiny he encounters on the throne the man best suited passively to second his views. A languishing, sad and cruel monarch, Louis the Thirteenth had all the infirmities and all the vices suited for his part. His weakness subjected him; his melancholy kept him apart; his cruelty aided the systematic rigors of his minister. To be pitiless is his recompense for the humiliation of obeying. To order punishments, whose bearing had escaped him, was for him to be a king. He was, however, personally brave, and a taste for arms was the only thing that could draw him from the somnolency into which mystic amours plunged him; a circumstance very favorable for the designs of Richelieu, who was about to set Europe on fire and France in motion.

Let us say the whole at first. Richelieu had no bowels for the people, and judged burgherism as a great lord would. He compared the people to mules, who were spoiled by quiet.* In speaking of burgherism, he wrote that a base birth rarely produces qualities necessary in a magistrate; that in small extractions, there were frequently met minds of such thorny asperity and so difficult to lead, that their very virtue is prejudicial.† Of equal merit, he prefers him who could enhance, by external splendor, the dignity of his post. The same tree, according as it is planted in good or poor earth, produces fruit more or less handsome; for Richelieu, the good earth was noble blood. An adversary to the sale of offices, he, however, found in it this advantage, that it excluded people of a base condition.‡ Behold, then, the man for whom God had reserved the mission of clearing off the rubbish from the road by which burgherism was to advance in France. For these great men are but powerful blind men. The part which they play is rarely their own. The present result dazzles them, it employs them, whilst the Sovereign Ordainer of causes decides the after-consequences, and prepares the remote rebounds.

Obtaining aggrandizement by manufactures and commerce, burgherism must have earnestly desired that a rein should be placed on the depredations of the nobility, of that nobility which, in the States General, had exclaimed, "There was as much difference between us and the third estate as between master and servant."‡ It is for this that the celebrated ordinance of January 1629, known as the Code Michau, provided.

* Testament Politique, chap. 4. sec. 5, du Peuple, p. 150.

† Ibid. chap. 4. sec. 1. p. 133 and 134.

‡ Ibid.

Is the honor of this ordinance due, then, to Richelieu? He himself speaks of it as a work in which he took no part,* and which was not only drawn up but conceived by the keeper of the seals, Michael de Marillac. The truth is, that the first author of the *Code Michau* was France; for the elements which served to compose it had all been furnished by the states of 1614 and 1626. But if Richelieu did not make the ordinance of January, he adopted it, and it was owing to him that it was executed from one end of the kingdom to the other; an immense service rendered to burgherism; for how could it have addicted itself to commerce when the roads were covered with armed bandits, with stragglers from marching regiments, abusing the terror they inspired? What security was there for the small proprietor in a country in which the soldier quartered himself at his pleasure, and paid himself his wages by the most unbridled marauding. How humiliating for the third estate was this sovereignty of rapine. What disorder must there have been in a kingdom in which a mere provincial gentleman, like Lesdiguières, had dared to maintain, of his own private authority, the terrible custom-house of Valence, regarded by the merchants as a cut-throat place. It was high time to put an end to such anarchy; the *Code Michau* was pitiless. Those who took up lodgings in the villages without permission, were to be regarded as vagabonds, robbers; and the communes were invited to fall upon them to the sound of the tocsin.† “We prohibit all governors and lieutenant-generals of provinces,” says another article, “of whatsoever quality, dignity or condition they may be, all our bailiffs and seneschals, treasurers of France, etc., from levying, or suffering to be levied, any taxes or contributions upon our subjects, except by letters patent, expedited under our great seal, on penalty of confiscation of their persons and property.” Now, that Richelieu sets an example, that the privilege of impunity is taken away from the great, the law reigns, all returns to order, burgherism breathes; the roads, purged from bandits, are opened most freely to a more facilitated commerce; freed from a thousand subaltern tyrants, whom Voiture calls the *little tiercelets of the king*, the laboring part of the nation recovers a feeling of its dignity, it perceives that the quality of the guilty does not save them. What do I say? The *Code Michau* is there to teach burgherism that even in the army, the last refuge of the nobility, “the soldier may gradually rise by his services to the charge and offices of companies, even to the grade of captain, and *still higher*, if he shows himself worthy of it.”‡

But Richelieu was to meet resistance in the accomplishment of such plans. He awaited them, and closed his soul to pity. It is doubtless very difficult not to feel moved, when in the depths of the saloon in which these great designs were translated into decrees of death, the sinister figures of a Laubardemont or a Laffemas are perceived; when we think of a Marshal Marillac, beheaded for having converted a little straw and hay to his own use; when we remember Marie de Medicis expiring at Cologne, in abandonment and misery, and that hecatomb of gentlemen,

* “So favorable was the keeper of the seals to this work, that it was his own.” *Memoires de Richelieu*, t. 7. p. 587.

† *Code Michau*, Art. 252.

‡ Art. 229 of the Ordinance of January.

so tranquil, so bold in their last moments, and who at least knew how to die, even on the scaffold. Richelieu, stretched one day upon his bed, and almost gone, saw another sick man enter his room, and drag himself to him; it was Louis the Thirteenth. Another couch was prepared for the languishing monarch, near that of the cardinal. And of what are these two dying men discoursing in a low voice? They are concerting punishments. But let us be careful; there was not one among the illustrious condemned whom Richelieu struck, who was not at open war with the public good. Boutteville paid with his head for the violation of the law. The fatal ascendancy of favorites was destroyed in the person of Chalais. Montmorency expiated the provincial rebellion excited by the nobles. Connivances with the foreigner and treason to the state cost Cinq-Mars and de Thou their heads. Marillac was sacrificed for the necessity of an example in the midst of the scandal of universal speculation. The two queens had committed many other wrongs than offending the love or irritating the pride of Richelieu. *Alas! must I die at twenty-two?* exclaimed Cinq-Mars—and posterity has listened to this remark, so humane, so melancholy; it has found that Cinq-Mars was too young to die; it has forgotten that, in the eyes of the cardinal, Cinq-Mars was very young for treason. | Once beyond the reach of the armed nobility, what was required for burgherism to develop itself freely? It could not evidently attain to rule through individualism, unless it first procured unity of administration, without which individualism would be dissolution. For unity could not be entirely banished from a great union of men, and when it no longer exists, neither by a community of efforts, nor of beliefs, it is at least necessary that it should be found in the police of the state. A central administration, vigorously established, which substituted a single master for the thousand *little tiercelets of the king*, which it might hereafter restrain or dash to the earth, was what burgherism asked of the cardinal, and what the cardinal gave it by creating the intendancies.

It was impossible to strike a ruder blow at the anarchy which profited the nobles, and especially the aristocracy of the finances. The amount of the tax, decreed in the council, was transmitted to the treasurers general of France; but these powerful officers had, for many years, substituted their fancies for the royal authority; the assessment of the taxes and their collection had fallen into a disorder favorable to speculations; arbitrary authority, always injurious to the weakest class, ruled in them; "they have rendered the execution of our ordinances and commissions so difficult," says the preamble to the ordinance, "that it appears as if they wished directly to oppose and traverse them."* But Richelieu detested the federalism of the financiers, no less than that of the lords. He sent then into each province a commissioner, who, under the name of Intendant, was to preside in the place of the sovereign at the assessment of the imposts, to convene the election the day he chose to set apart for this labor,† to prevent overcharges of the poor, and finally to control the finances, the crown lands, the regulation of streets, etc., that is to impose the will of the council. There was no more hindrance, no more delay.

* Recueil d'Isambert, Ordinance of May, 1635.

† Art. 17, of the Ordinance.

The treasurers of France possessed but the shadow of their old authority. The intendants could order edicts concerning the finances to be registered without them—and to avoid all contests between them and the courts of aids, the proceedings were evoked to the king's council.* From thence issued the orders, there the accounts were rendered. Thus re-appeared the *missi dominici*, by which the capitularies of Charlemagne had regulated the offices, and which had served to restrain feudality under the kings of the second race;† thus was modern centralization inaugurated.

But an attentive and tutelary government, and a vigorous administration were not yet enough for burgherism. A class naturally friendly to peace, devoted to finance, commerce, learning and the study of the arts, burgherism would have been condemned to an obscure part in a society whose distinctive emblem of nobility was the sword. How was it definitively to dethrone force? By inaugurating the royalty of mind: Richelieu was the friend of men of letters, the protector of Poussin, the restless rival of Corneille, the founder of the French academy.

When the great cardinal, the continuer of the revival of letters, founded the Academy, he dreamed, we must admit, a future for our language as brilliant as that of Greece or Rome. But did he understand that a language rendered perfect, become clear and logical, sooner or later places itself at the service of the right, and is easily changed into a lever of revolution wherever millions of men suffer? Had he any doubt that this absolute monarchy, built up by him with so much pains, would be overthrown by thought, of which language is the life? Did he know, that to render a language worthy of serving as an universal coin for the exchanges of the mind, is to furnish one word of order for all oppressed people? Did he foresee, could he have foreseen, that one day, for excited kings, for Europe reduced to a camp, the French language would call itself Propagandism? But in truth, it matters little whether the founder of the French Academy had measured all the bearings of his work; whether he had foreseen how far this power of talent, once recognized by letters patent, would go. Perhaps he had at first no other design than to draw a company of flatterers around himself, and to give the importance of a tradition to his elegy. Why not? Among superior men, the loftiest thoughts have frequently a personal side, and mask a weakness. It was not enough for Richelieu to conduct with one hand the *thirty years' war*, and to labor with the other for the unity of the monarchy. France obeyed him; why should not the muse be submissive to him? The vanity of Richelieu willed the Academy.

Is it not very singular, that a man who presided at the fêtes of the Place de Grève, should have warmed himself to the composition of tragic-comedies, for the representation of which he spent as much as an hundred thousand crowns? He awaited, trembling, the rising of the curtain and the decree of the pit. "He was," says Pelisson,‡ "transported beyond himself when they applauded. Now he stood erect, now

* Article 2 and 9 of the Ordinance.

† Mollard, *Hist. du Système politique de la France*, t. 1. p. 164. et suiv.

‡ *Hist. de l'Académie*.

he showed himself to the house by leaning his body half-way out of the box, whence he imposed silence to enable the finer parts to be heard." We may smile at this simple enthusiasm of an author who admires himself the sudden changes of fortune of *Mirame*, after having changed the face of the kingdom of France, pushed on the armies of Luther against those of Rome, filled Europe with the noise of his negotiations and his victories, and shaken the monarchy of Charles the Fifth. Incalculable consequences will spring from this human infirmity. There will result from it, among many other causes, the official advent of letters, their ascendancy, the dignity of writers and thinkers, the magistracy of the mind.

One day when the queen mother entered the room in which the cardinal was, the latter received her without rising; and far from giving his state of health as an excuse, he dared to maintain that the Roman purple gave him a right to remain seated, even in the presence of the queen mother. And yet this same cardinal had introduced to his intimacy the obscure poets Gombault, Desmarets, Colletet, Boisrobert, and when he chatted familiarly with them, giving up his manuscripts for their erasures, or pursuing an Alexandrine couplet, he exacted that they should remain seated and covered.*

It is, however, sufficient, to read the *Testament Politique*, to judge that Richelieu was far from desiring the diffusion of information and from foreseeing it. "If letters," says he, "were profaned to all kinds of minds, we should see more people capable of forming doubts, than of resolving them, and many would be fitter to oppose the truth, than to defend it."† A great number of his colleagues took umbrage at this minister; he wishes laborers and traders to be ignorant of letters; he prefers the rudeness of ignorance as the most suitable to form soldiers. But when a high school is instituted, which teaches to think and to speak well, how can a limit be traced to the expansion of ideas and their powers?

Another singular thing. It was under the patronage of Richelieu, that the *Gazette de France*, the first of our political journals, sprang into being. He thought he could give one instrument more to despotism; we know now, how menacing to absolute monarchies is the sovereignty of these flying sheets.

Engaged in maintaining a continual warfare, now against the Spaniards in the Valteline, now against the Imperialists on the Rhine, and at home against the two great leaders of the Huguenots, Soubise and Rohan, Richelieu had little leisure to study, at least in detail, the wants of commerce, the reformation of the imposts, all that interested burgherism directly; and yet he availed himself of the short intervals of repose which so many enemies left him, to lay down large and fruitful principles, to take or indicate decisive measures, which of themselves alone would satisfy us as to his character. Richelieu prepared what Louis the Fourteenth was to accomplish. It was in the assembly of notables of 1628, held at the Thuilleries, that the cardinal demanded a marine. It was, however,

* Bazin, *Hist. de France sous Louis Thirteenth*, t. 4.

† *Testament Politique*, chap. 2. sect. 10.

less commerce than war which was at the bottom of his thoughts. He had sworn to subdue Rochelle, and the political side ruled in his wishes; but burgherism appropriated the industrial side to itself. The truth is, when he made to the notables the proposition so well received by them to found a marine, Richelieu remembered with bitterness, the humiliation undergone by Sully, who, having embarked at Calais on a vessel bearing the colors of France at the masthead, had been constrained to lower his flag before an English cruizer, whose bullets *pierced the hearts of all good Frenchmen*.^{*} This affront, which Henry the Fourth had undergone, Richelieu resented as warmly as a personal injury. He wanted a fleet, both to prevent the return of such insolence, and to chastise the Huguenots without being obliged to hire vessels from Holland.

But the designs with which politics inspired him, gave birth to results by which commerce was to profit; for a marine calls for colonies, and its existence is bound up with the necessity for distant expeditions. Thus Richelieu was led to form the company of Morbihan, in imitation of the great companies of England and Holland. He charged it with the commerce of both the Indies, and granted considerable privileges to it; the power of building vessels, of casting cannon and balls, of making powder and saltpetre, of holding two markets a week and four fairs a year; the right of enrolling and arming under its orders sound beggars and vagabonds, and finally the grant of the port of Morbihan and its precincts, with a special jurisdiction, independent of the Parliament of Brittany.[†]

The efforts of this company becoming abortive, Richelieu was not discouraged. Two years afterwards he replaced it by a more accredited association, on which favors, encouragements and exemptions were lavished.

He attached so much importance to these movements, that he wished, in some way or other, to be the soul of them. The post of Admiral of France might interfere with his plans; he reimbursed M. de Montmorency for it, suppressed it and placed himself in its place under the title of superintendent general of the navigation and commerce of France. A tempest having about this time stranded some Portuguese vessels on our shores, he refused the waifs, for which two hundred thousand livres were offered him, and took advantage of the occasion to abolish the *right of wreckage*, whose origin belongs to periods of barbarism.

By acting thus, the cardinal freed commerce of a great burthen. It has been remarked, says Forbonnais, that the rights and formalities exacted by the admiral or his officers, was one of the causes of the decline of commerce, and a serious obstacle to the re-establishment of a marine.

We have had occasion to say that burgherism aspired and should aspire to the reign of toleration. But can we pronounce the word toleration when speaking of Richelieu? It is, however, true, that this priest, so absolute in his will, respected religious freedom. He only demanded that the reformed should not have strong places, arms, chiefs

^{*} Testament Politique, de la puissance sur la mer, p. 30.

[†] Art. de la Compagnie de Morbihan, cité in extenso par Forbonnais, t. p. 592.

to lead them to civil war. A system of dragooning appeared to him to be, not a crime, but a fault. Having no pity for the Calvinists who troubled the state, he cared but little, at the bottom, about their opinion on the Eucharist. The true impiety of the Huguenots in his eyes was their alliance with foreigners. In every thing and above all else, he was minister. The interests of the priesthood were secondary in his heart to those of the kingdom; and it is one of the marked traits of this great figure, that being a priest, he dared to hold up his head in the Vatican, and never forgot that the prince of the church was the minister of France. Thus, he who beat down at Rochelle the Protestants, succored by the fleet of Buckingham, did not hesitate to ally himself with them, when, under the orders of the heroic Gustavus Aldolphus, they marched against the armies of the Catholic house of Austria and of the holy inquisition. Richelieu was a fanatic in matters of state, but in no others.

He appeared assured of the disinterestedness of his views to the very last. And yet this terrible priest had fainting fits during his life. He had moments of anguish and alarm when on the eve of triumphing over Gaston and his accomplices. It is related, that avoiding the soldiers of Cinq-Mars, he marched to the adventure by by-paths, stopping by night in places where he was not expected.* The courage of intellect, the nobility of all kinds, raised him above these weaknesses of his frail nature. On the day of his death, when surrounded by courtiers, who trembled to see him rise up again, and by some friends who were plunged in tears, for he had friends, he exhibited great serenity. "Behold my judge!" he said, when the consecrated host was presented to him, as if he confided in the justice, and not in the clemency of God. Still he had a burst of tenderness. He foresaw perhaps that his memory was about to be torn to pieces; perhaps he recalled the words written by himself on the news of the death of Wallenstein. "When the tree has fallen, all run to the branches to endeavor to destroy it. The affection of men does not regard that which is no more."†

Let burgherism remember when considering the celebrated portrait at the Louvre which reveals so well the moral physiognomy of Richelieu, that this elegant and bold personage, sprung from the grave brush of Philip of Champagne, is its introducer into business. The malice of story-tellers has enabled them to show us Richelieu frivolous, eaten up with vanity, discarding the cassock to go in the dress of a cavalier to the house of Marion Delorme; but when he passes across history, he is dressed in his red robe, tinged by the blood of revolted nobility. Fortunate, unique man! he induced the parliaments to avenge on his rivals, the wounds to his love, the defeats to his pride; he frequently brought his personal passions into play, under the cover of national justice; and we scarcely even yet distinguish what he wished to confound, so well did he know how to identify himself with France, enveloped, and, as it were, borne along in his fortune.

* Sainte-Aulane, *Hist. de la Fronde*, t. 1. p. 74.

† *Memoires de Richelieu*, t. 8. de la Collect. Michaud, liv. 25. p. 525.

CHAPTER IV.

PROGRESS OF BURGERISM.

THE FRONDE AND JANSENISM.

The Parliament—Deliberations of the Chamber of Saint Louis ; abortive burgher revolution—Parliament attains to omnipotence and is frightened at it—The Fronde of the Parliament conquered by itself—Inanity of the Fronde of the princes—Birth of Jansenism ; its historical importance in the history of high burgherism—Life at Port Royal—Jansenism was the Parliament in the Church.

RICHELIEU, by crushing the remains of feudality, had only prepared for the absolute royalty of new enemies. The counterpoise was not destroyed, but only displaced. The legal opposition of high burgherism succeeded the armed resistance of the nobility ; the old intermediary having disappeared, the throne and the parliament found themselves face to face.

The parliament was originally but a mere judicial company. From the habit granted to it of registering the edicts and of criticising them when registering them, it had become a political body ; it had consideration and riches. Dukes, peers, and princes of the blood occupied seats in it. Behind it, always ready to sustain it, were a number of companies made in its likeness and animated with its spirit. It had as its clients the possessors of the judicial and financial offices, an imposing and numerous body, to whom the inheritance of posts gave the consistency of an aristocracy. It marched at the head of forty-five thousand families.

The ambition of political bodies is violent in its nature and indefatigable, because those whom it carries along, willingly regard it as a passion for the public good, and because it unites as it were, the energy of devotion to the sharpness of egotism. Parliament was burning with desire to try its strength, to increase it, and the death of Richelieu was an admirable opportunity for it.

France, having escaped from the restraints of an intelligent, but harsh despotism, bounded joyously towards liberty. It was indignant at a too long repose in servitude ; it wished for written guarantees ; it sought for friendly laws ; it asked why princes should not live under an immutable rule, and should not be, according to the beautiful expression of the Coadjutor Retz, "like God, who always obeys what he has once commanded."*

The death of Louis the Thirteenth, who soon followed his minister to the tomb, added to the impetuosity of this movement. A minority ! What a career was open to the efforts of ambition. And was it not already a lively encouragement for the pride of the parliamentarians, that the regency had been decreed by them to the imperious Anne of Austria ?

* *Memoires du Cardinal de Retz*, t. 1. p. 125.

What man besides had they before them? After his terrible *red emnity*, Mazarin was almost pitied. The powerful qualities of his predecessor, too near his own, made them appear dull and vulgar. They lessened unjustly, by the comparison, his virtues, his vices, even his defects. His wariness, a little underhanded, was called hypocrisy, his prudence, weakness. He was sly, they called him a knave. They thought him a coward, because his courage was only that of circumstances, and his boldness never surpassed the required measure. They attacked him finally, because Richelieu had chosen him to survive him and he had disappeared in the splendor of his predecessor.

Thus is explained the origin of the Fronde, or rather of the two Frondes; for there was one of the parliament and another of the princes. They both miscarried, but the first was the announcement of a revolution, and the second but the abortion of an intrigue.

That might have been a memorable day forever in the history of burgherism, in which the parliament united in itself the court of aids and the court of accounts in the chamber of Saint Louis, to place a limit on absolute power and create a charter. But that elevation of sentiments which rends asunder small obstacles by the force of wishing for great things, that determination of going, if necessary, beyond the designated end to be sure of attaining it; that disinterestedness which the enthusiasm of justice and generous intoxications give, were wanting to the reformers of the chamber of Saint Louis. Their work proved it well.

They demanded that in future no tax should be levied, until after having been submitted to their control, freely expressed;* it was against the royal will, to usurp the sovereignty of the people. They demanded, in order to increase the venal value of their offices, that there should not be any new ones created;† it was to make of their own interest a law of public safety. They proposed not even to reimburse their advances to the farmers of the revenue;‡ it was to chastise robbers by a robbery which reduced the government to their level. They clamored for the destruction of the intendancies; it was to sacrifice to the federalism of the provincial parliaments, the well understood interests of the middle classes and the unity of the state.

But in return they said, that henceforth every arrested individual must be brought before his natural judge within twenty-four hours, and that the taxes should be diminished one-quarter for the benefit of the people. Paris was agitated and in motion.§

The people, at first astonished that they had thought of them, were not long in breaking out into transports of gratitude. From thence its anger against the court at the news of the carrying off the counsellors Blancmesnil and Broussel; from thence the docile strength, which, in the days

* Deliberations arrested in the assembly of the Sovereign Courts held and commenced in the Chamber of Saint Louis, June 30th, 1648, art. 3.

† Ibid. art. 19.

‡ The President Le Coigneux said to the Chancellor Seguier, "that he was astonished that after having failed in his word with all the honorable men in the kingdom, he should find a difficulty in failing in it with a hundred thousand knaves." Sainte Aulaire, *Hist. de la Fronde*, t. 1. chap. 4. p. 20.

§ Deliberations, etc., art. 10.

of the barricades, it lent to the burgher companies, commissioned to restrain whilst exciting it; from thence, finally, that extraordinary exaltation of souls which forced the court to humble itself in the declaration of the 24th of October, 1648, before the parliamentary charter.

And yet the royal authority had to oppose to its adversaries the marvellous success of its foreign policy and its arms; the victories of Rocroi, Fribourg, and Nordlingen appeared to give glory as a tutoress to the child Louis the Fourteenth. When the barricades were formed in Paris, the *Te Deum* which celebrated the battle of Sens, gained by the stripling Condé, was scarcely finished; and on the very day on which the court avowed itself conquered by the magistracy, the 24th of October, 1648, the treaty of Munster restored forever French Alsace.*

Such comparisons show clearly that the influence of parliament was preponderant at this period. From whence then came it that the revolutionary spark was so quickly extinguished? From whence then comes it, that in a few months from this time, the orders of the public place were dissipated in seditions of the boudoir and frivolous conspiracies? Follow the parliament through the noise of the revolts excited by itself; ask it.

Violating its promises, the court flies; it assembles troops, besieges the capital, and Condé commands them.

But how imposing and strong is the situation of the besieged parliament. It has but to make a signal and Paris is found erect. It is for it, that the burgher companies are in arms in the city, which never sleeps; it is it which, through the Coadjutor de Retz, disposes of the popular passions; it is as heroines in its cause that the Duchesses de Bouillon and de Longueville traverse the place de Grève and mount the steps of the Hotel de Ville, amid the acclamations of the people, charmed by their courage and their beauty. An alliance is formed between the magistracy and the nobility; but the magistrate occupies the first place in it. These lawyers, until then despised by the men of the sword, lead in their train, compromised and lost in their quarrel, a Prince de Conti, a Prince de Marcillac, the Dukes d'Elbeuf, de Bouillon, de Beaufort, the Marshal de la Mothe, and in the mixed crowd which filled the galleries of the palace, and the saloons of the town hall, the cuirass of the gentleman produced less effect than the long robe of the counsellor.

Now what was it that engrossed parliament during this time? It feared the people.

When in 1646 the President General Emery proposed the establishment of a tariff on all merchandize introduced into Paris, the parliament at first rejected it as destructive of privileges in matters of impost, and then assented to it, excepting from it *every thing which was the production of the burghers*. This fact, which Forbonnais has justly condemned,† describes the parliament. They feared the people because they did not love them.

Let us be just and forget nothing. It was during the siege of Paris, in 1649, and without the spirit of revolt was breaking forth with unusual

* Le President Hinault, *Abregé Chronologique*, t. 2. p. 632. Digitized by Google

† Forbonnais. *Recherches et Considerations sur les finances*, t. 1., sur l'année, 1646.

violence. In Italy, the city of Naples was full of the recollection of conquering Massaneillo, and it still trembled; at Constantinople, the Janizaries triumphed over strangled Ibrahim; Germany, which the thirty years war had covered with its ravages, at the peace of Westphalia, saluted the rebellion of Luther, admitted to make a part of the public law; and the English democracy at a gesture from Cromwell had struck a blow with the axe which all Europe had heard.

There was no necessity, however, in France, that the successful and peaceful administrators of justice should have stopped alarmed. They were seized with vertigo on heights on which they were not made to walk. They were surprised and alarmed at what they could do.

It is true that the nobles of their party began to talk of a pact with Spain; and it is to the honor of the parliament that it felt but indignation and disgust at such tendencies. But it would have been easy for them to restrain the generals of the Fronde and to cut short the disgraceful offers of the foreigner, without casting the flag of the public liberties far from them. Was not the Coadjutor de Retz with his genius, his boldness and his popularity, entirely devoted to them? Did he not answer for the support of the multitude? Did the burgher companies recognize any other standard than that of parliament? But in a revolution we must go on or fall. The parliament understood this, but it preferred falling to taking another step. Thus in proportion as its power increased, did its trouble. It hurries on a peace, when the means for a vigorous prosecution of the war are offered to it on all sides. It learned one day that the Duke de Longueville was pressing on with forced marches to the relief of the capital; that the Duke de la Tremouille was leading ten thousand men from Poitou; that Turenne, crossing the Rhine, was coming to offer his name, his glory and his army* to the magistrates—and immediately, lost in despair at having to conquer the monarchy and conduct France, the parliament, through its negotiations, abdicates at Rouel into the hands of Mazarin its enemy. For what but the abdication of parliament was this treaty of Rouel, so vain, so false a consecration of the declaration of the 24th of October, whose execution no one remained to claim. The article in regard to the reduction of taxes had been abandoned;† Mazarin hastened to respond to the clause concerning arbitrary arrests by arresting three princes. And the parliament permitted him to do it; it wished to be conquered.

Culpable pusillanimity, of which Mathieu Molé should bear the chief responsibility in the eyes of history. But he at least knew how to honor his weakness by his dignity. As if to rid himself of the alarm with which the sovereignty of the people inspired him, he braved it when furious and raging, and he thus covered the timidity of his views by the intrepidity of his heart.

It is not worth while to pause on what follows. To combat laughingly for employments to the noise of songs; to agitate the people without having a noble idea, without exhibiting an energetic passion; to obey to

* Sainte-Aulaire, Hist. de la Fronde, t. 1. chap. 7. p. 329.

† The Treaty of Ruel, art. 19, provides, that it shall be for the advantage of the tax payers, as his Majesty shall judge it suitable.

the death, to treason, gallantries which passed for love; to change a party in changing a mistress, and to go over to an enemy when he is called Condé, or even when he is Turenne—such was the Fronde of the princes. The time for military and feudal insurrections was so long passed, that the nobility, reduced to its own strength, could not maintain a serious revolt.

Absolute power then triumphed easily in the person of Mazarin, always a skilful minister, since he had that rare privilege, that unique glory, of dying all-powerful and despised.

But what matters it? It was now known from what side resistance was to come. Burgherism was convinced of a formidable truth, to wit: that its union with the people would decide, on the first occasion, the fate of France, and put an end to absolute power. Besides, if the struggle ceased momentarily in the political order, it was continued in the social, more quietly, but more decisively, perhaps, and constantly to the advantage of burgherism.

We have seen the Jesuits born. Their institutes left neither place nor refuge to human personality.* Their general was for them a living Christ. From thence there was a complete absence of personal pretensions, but a prodigious *esprit de corps*, a collective ambition, urged on to madness; for it is at once the vice and the force of every private association, that egotism, apparent death in the individual, revives in the mass with an indomitable energy. Such was the case with the Jesuits. These monks, whom the vow of poverty enchained, disposed of all fortunes, those voluntary slaves of a man, himself the slave of a rule, were the masters of astonished Europe. They were found imposing themselves on Rome in Rome, producing dread in Spain by the inquisition, leading in France the terrible play of the factions, weighing on Naples and Lisbon, installing themselves at Vienna to kindle there that famous war with which Protestant Germany burned for thirty years; every where dreaded and endured, accused of despotism and yet concerned through some of their agents in every revolt, accused of regicidal tendencies and enveloping princes by their imperious services; always erect in their humility, holding in their hands the souls of kings, the fate of the people, and troubling or governing generations from the bosom of their formidable silence. And yet the world would sooner or later have escaped from them, if they had had the insolence of wishing to rule it, whilst remaining isolated from it. They understood this well, and this suppleness of their morality, which has so often been objected to them, was the most profound trait of their policy. For example, to avoid encountering the current which was carrying modern nations towards industrial pursuits, they addicted themselves to commerce, become for them a means of conquest. Ranke informs us, that in the seventeenth century, the *Collegio Romano* made no scruples about manufacturing cloth at Macerata; that the Jesuits had representatives at the fairs, and, that in order to facilitate the relations between the different colleges, they engaged in banking operations.† Commerce gave them colonies. Japan opened to them a traffic

* Cerutti. *Apologie des Jesuites*, chap. 10. Digitized by Google

† Hist. de la Papauté, t. 4. p. 420.

in pearls, precious stones, even in negroes.* Let us add, from regard to truth, that they did not always attain power by such profane routes. It was charity alone which subjected to many of their missionaries so many barbarous countries in which the memorials of their courage and the traces of their blood were to remain; it was the ardor of faith which urged them among the Illinois, the Hurons, the negroes and the Ethiopians.† They carried to Paraguay, in connection with the views of statesmen, thoughts truly christian, and the glorious desire of organizing a fraternal society. But elsewhere, what trick! What skill without greatness! What dark paths! What abasements in the calculations of pride! Were not the Jesuits of China seen to veil the image of the cross, as if they blushed at the shame of their God dying on a gibbet?

•Thus every thing was good for the Jesuits, every thing served as their instrument; patience and enthusiasm; courage and artifice; boldness, intrigue, good and evil. And the surprise redoubles when we turn our glance from their external actions to their underhand pursuits. Children belonged to them by education; through the confessional, reduced to the counsels of indulgent friendship, they charmed the restless and tender hearts of the women. Their authority glided almost unperceived into families and soon became sovereign in them. They made marriages, controlled wills, prepared legal proceedings, and even went so far as to regulate the family pleasures.‡

Now what was the doctrine which could best sustain this encroaching suppleness? Evidently that of free will. What was more suitable to establish the regime of authority on unshakeable foundations than to say to men, "your eternal safety and your eternal damnation are dependent upon yourselves; but if you deceive yourselves, hell is there. Here are we to guide you." Such is the true bearing of the famous book on grace and free will, published in 1588, by the Spanish Jesuit Molina. By declaring themselves Molinists, the Jesuits half denied the doctrine of original sin, which making man the slave of his own corruption, refers the merit of his salvation solely to the gratuitous mercy of God. But theology had always been subordinate to politics with the Jesuits. They did not hesitate to proclaim human freedom, reserving to themselves the right of regulating its employment absolutely, and counting on their skill in rendering the paths of duty pleasant and smiling to obtain it.

Jansenism sprung out of opposition to this policy and its effects.

If Jansenism had been but the lustre of a theological thesis; if its influence had died, stifled in the walls of a convent, this would be no place to stop over it. But no; Jansenism by giving a religious covering to the political passions of the magistracy, seconded the ascending march of burgherism. It caused a power until then unknown to strike at the heart of public opinion. Parliaments and royalty were broken to pieces

* Le Jesuite Scotti, *Monarchie des Solipses*, Rem. sur le chap. 16. p. 478. publiée par Henin de Cuvilliers, traduction de Pierre Restaut.

† Cerutti, chap. 13. p. 140.

‡ Des défauts du gouvernement de la Société de Jesus, par le Jesuite Mariana. Extrait tiré du *Mercurio Jesuitique*, p. 2.

by it and mingled in a confused, murderous melee. Forty years of bloody follies and combats in the eighteenth century, proclaim sufficiently the bearing of Jansenism. It occupied, as we shall see, much room in the thoughts of Voltaire, and we will find it at the foot of the scaffold of Louis the Sixteenth.

Towards the beginning of the seventeenth century a correspondence, active, mysterious and full of sombre thoughts, was opened between two men, who when young, had been united in study and friendship, on the benches of a Flemish school. The Belgian Jansenius was a patient theologian; the Bearnese Duvergier de Hauranne, afterwards Abbot of Saint-Cyran, was born a sectary. There was something of Calvin in these two men, implacable in their piety and systematic adorers of a terrible God. Still they did not avow themselves to be Calvinists, they did not believe themselves to be so; and it was through the shade of the great name of St. Augustin that they undertook to reform christianity, too much softened, as they said, by the Jesuits. Many letters from Jansenius to his friend have been collected and published; they exhale a savage perfume. They are moreover true letters of conspirators. They are written in cipher. Jansenius is called in them *Sulpice*, Saint-Cyran, *Rongear*.* *Chinix* is the strange name by which the Jesuits are designated. Now what are they about? Apparently but little; of reviving against the Jesuits and the partisans of free will, that old doctrine of grace which Saint Augustin had formerly defended against Pelagius and which Luther had resumed against Erasmus. Do not toss your head in disdain; politics are at the bottom of the debate, and it will have formidable consequences.

Saint Augustin called himself Aurelius Augustinus: Saint Cyran left the last of these two names for his friend, and taking himself the first,† he published in 1636 a book called *Petrus Aurelius*. The theory of Jansenism was not exposed in it, but the germ of the strifes it contained might be discovered in it. In *Petrus Aurelius* he attacked the monarchical system of the church for the benefit of the episcopal aristocracy; we shall see, sooner or later, the Jansenists undermining the absolute power of royalty for the benefit of a parliamentary aristocracy.

Saint Cyran, I have said, was born a sectary. Whilst his friend was laboring at that weighty book of *Augustinus*, over which fifty years of disputes were to pass, he himself, mingling with the world, sought and made proselytes. He first tried the women. To gain them, he had no recourse to any of those soft seductions by which the tender and charming Francis de Sales was armed; he preferred roughness as more in conformity with his rigid nature and his gloomy theories. He knew besides that women are extreme in all things; that weak and impassioned, excessive strength easily draws and retains them; that no path is too sharp for them to reach him whom they love, especially when the beloved object is God. He had violent and strong convictions, a severe countenance. But when a man, habitually inflexible, descends to indulgence,

* *Memoires d'Arnauld d'Andilly*, notice of Port-Royal by Petitot, t. 1. p. 19, in the collection des *Memoires sur l'histoire de France*.

† Saint Beuve, *Port Royal*, liv. i. p. 334.

his sway is but the dearer to subjugated souls. There is nothing so sweet as an unexpected smile upon austere lips. Saint Cyran could then believe in success, and he obtained it.

Near Chevreuse, six leagues from Paris, was an abbey called Port Royal, because, according to the Chronicle, Philip Augustus, lost in the hunt, had been found there by his train.* At the time of which we speak, the nuns had left it for some years, to seek another Port Royal in the Faubourg Saint Jacques, in Paris, so that Port Royal des Champs was but a silent, deserted monastery, inhabited only by an old priest, left there to keep the chapel in order.† The surrounding valley, saddened by stagnant waters and infested by serpents, was frightful, and as Madame de Sévigné afterwards wrote, "well calculated to inspire a taste for seeking one's welfare." It was this valley, however, which gave a country to Jansenism. The nuns of Port Royal were at that time under the jurisdiction of two women of great character and burning asceticism; Angelique Arnauld and her sister Agnes. They had both of them been interred, as it were, alive in the cloister from their very birth, and by a privilege which paints the manners of the times, Angelique had been made abbess of Port Royal‡ at eleven years of age, and Agnes, the coadjutress of her sister,§ at six. Saint Cyran knew them, controlled them by his sombre gravity, and was not long in obtaining the spiritual direction of the community. This conquest was decisive, and, singular thing, it assigns a date to one of the most important political movements that modern history has produced.

Angelique Arnauld had a nephew, whose reputation and eloquence were unequalled at the bar of Paris. Antoine Le Maître, already attracted towards the path of devotion by the example and influence of his aunt, one day met Saint Cyran at the pillow of a dying person; he heard him pronounce those supreme words, he saw him opening heaven to a heart about to cease to beat, and from that moment he felt himself conquered. In vain did he endeavor to remain faithful to that world which intoxicated him with praise; he was no longer grateful; the profane power of his talents appeared to have forever abandoned him, and when in the accustomed hall of triumph, his eyes fell upon the dusty crucifix before him—he himself tells the story—they filled with tears. He could not resist this strong emotion, and Paris soon learned with astonishment that the illustrious orator had built a small house for himself in the neighborhood of Port Royal, to abandon himself at it to solitude and the rigors of penance. His brother, M. de Sericourt, who had returned from the army, went to see him, and perceiving him, still however, sought for him "in that mournful atmosphere of penance which surrounded him."|| The latter then said, "You do not recognize me, my brother. Behold Le Maître of former days. Now, however, he is dead to the world, and seeks only to die to himself." Softened, distracted, the young major threw away his sword, and wrote to the Abbot of Saint Cyran, "My

* Du Fossé, *Memoires pour Servir a l'histoire de Port Royal*, Utrecht, 1739.

† Fontaine, *Memoires pour Servir a l'histoire de Port Royal*, t. 1. p. 27. Cologne, 1753.

‡ Ibid. p. 23.

§ Ibid. p. 26.

|| *Memoires de Fontaine*, t. 1. p. 299.

only thought is to follow Jesus Christ, the chief and prince of penitents, as my general." He then, in his turn, became a hermit, and remained with his elder brother. They hereafter styled themselves "the first and second hermit." Their three other brothers, Messieurs de Saci, Sainte Elme and de Vallemont, then joined them; and then the priest Sanglin, Claude Lancelout, Toussaint Desmares successively added themselves to the fraternal group. Such was the beginning of the sect.

Modest commencement, we might say voluntary puerilities. Richelieu, however, took umbrage at it; and it is one of the greatest proofs of his genius, that in the simple fact of an advocate renouncing the world, to bury himself in penance in a faubourg, he discovered the black point from which the distant tempest announced itself. Saint Cyran was then arrested, imprisoned at Vincennes and interrogated. "I have no doubt," he wrote some time afterwards to Antoine Le Maître, "that your retreat was one of the principal causes of my accusation."* Precious lines; which show clearly that it was not at a personal enemy, but at a founder of a sect that Richelieu struck. Thus the persecution did not stop with the leader. La Maître and Sericourt, by the advice of the archbishop, left the neighborhood of Port Royal of Paris, and took refuge at Port Royal des Champs. Laubardemont pursued them thither with odious zeal, and they were obliged to seek further off, at Ferté Milon, an asylum for their already suspected piety.

But if Richelieu was not deceived as to the danger of the new tendencies, he evidently was as to the mode of combating them. Persecution inflamed courage already rebellious. The importance of the growing sect was measured by the hatred of such a man as Richelieu. Saint Cyran, at first crushed, was not long in making his sufferings a subject of exaltation and a means of strength. He had the exterior of a saint, he had the ascendancy of one. He agitated every thing from his prison. Through Sanglin, he pushed on the nuns to a point indicated in advance. Through the amiable and elegant Arnauld d'Audilly, he attracted the popularity of the saloons to himself. Indomitable and resigned, he imposed himself on the respect of the Governor of Vincennes, he ruled him. On their side Le Maître and Sericourt soon found that persecution had gone to sleep, and they took advantage of it to return to Port Royal des Champs. It was at this time that Antoine Arnauld, the youngest brother of Angelique, and from nature a powerful wrestler, became one of the partisans of the captive. Thus Jansenism, still little known, scarcely indicated, appeared to spread itself, precisely because it was floating and vague. They talked constantly of a book which was to fix the doctrine forever; a marvellous book, said the adepts in a low voice, which was to reveal Saint Augustin to the world, and to serve as a code for regenerated Christianity. This work finally appeared in 1640, under the title of *Augustinus*, two years after the death of Jansenius, its author. It was a heavy folio, written in Latin, upon and against free will. Its success was immense, the way for it having been prepared by mystery—and what nobody read, everybody admired. What could have happened more fortunately for Saint Cyran? His great enemy died on the 4th of

* *Memoires de Fontaine*, t. 1. p. 252.

December, 1642. On hearing this news, which promised him liberty, he exclaimed, with an involuntary and prodigious burst of pride, "Riche-lieu has died on the day of the festival of Saint Cyran."* He did not know that he himself was soon to fall beneath the hand of that God, whose avenger he dared to make himself. Having left Vincennes on the 14th of May, 1643, amidst the sound of musketry and the flourish of trumpets, he was deposited lifeless in the parish church of Saint Jacques du Haut Pas, on the 12th of October of the same year. Numbers of the faithful hastened to pray around the body, and a sick gentleman thought himself cured by having kissed the feet of the saint. His name was Bascle, and he became a solitary through a dream, which having led him to a desert like Port Royal des Champs, had shown him Duvergier de Hauranne in Saint John the Baptist.† This is the first link in that chain of superstitious follies which we shall see prolonged into the eighteenth century, and which at the other extremity touches the tomb of the deacon Paris.

Saint Cyran, moreover, died in victory, and the book of *Frequent Communion*, by Antoine Arnauld, proved clearly that Jansenius and his friend had not carried the destinies of Jansenism away with them. The impression produced by the work of Arnauld was general and profound. A thing was then seen worthy of note; men of the world, fashionable libertines, gallant women applauded in concert a thesis which condemned the system of easy devotions. The Jesuits, humbled and furious, accused Arnauld of heresy for a phrase in which he placed Saint Paul on the same footing with Saint Peter, and obtained from the queen mother an order to send the culprit to Rome. But the clergy, the Parliament, the University, the Sorbonne, all the bodies in the kingdom, immediately rose against it.‡ Then appeared that pamphlet of Father Bessacier, which the Archbishop of Paris censured§ as swollen with the blackest venom of calumny, and which aided the progress of the sect, whose ruin the Jesuits had sworn.

The number of solitaries continued to increase. Among the ruins of Port Royal des Champs, arrived, one after another, men of different conditions, and several of an illustrious rank. Now it was M. de la Rivière, a cousin of the Duke of Saint Simon, now M. Hamon, a celebrated physician, or still better, Arnauld d'Andilly, whose spiritual and joyous old age the world loved. The colony was also increased by several men of the sword, soldiers tired of murder and repentant duelists. For example, Messieurs de Bessi, de Pontis, de Beaumont, de la Petitière.|| There were soon not enough cells for the penitents, and Port Royal gradually extended itself in the valley. The appearance of the place also became less sombre, thanks to the watchful care of d'Andilly, who constituted himself the superintendent of the gardens. Madame de Guémènè, and the Duke de Liancourt, built new country-houses there. Pious pilgrims crowded thither from all parts.

The mode of life at Port Royal was ascetic and singularly laborious. The solitaries rose at three in the morning. After matins and laudes,

* *Memoires de Fontaine*, t. 2. p. 70. † Saint Beuve, *Port Royal*, t. 1. liv. 2. p. 487.

‡ Racine, *Histoire de Port Royal*, p. 76. § *Ibid.* p. 83. || *Memoires de Fossé*, p. 67.

they kissed the earth like the chartreux; they then went to prayers for a long time. With one exception, they drank cider and water. Some wore hair cloth. All slept on straw.* Terrestrial affections were so regulated in them by their attention to things of heaven, that family duties disappeared before those of the spiritual hierarchy. The mother of M. de Saici, for example, obeyed him as if she had been his daughter, because he was her priest and confessor.† Practices of devotion did not, however, absorb all their time. To wrench from the Jesuits the direction of youth, that is the future, they established schools, which became the glory of France, and which gave to it Racine. Lancelot was the principal preceptor, Nicole seconded him, and Antoine le Maître did not disdain to fatigue his elegant voice in the service of an audience of children. There were hours set apart for manual labor, to pruning trees, to adding to the plantations. But what was to immortalize the employment of so many grave days, were all these learned works, which literature and instruction owe to Port Royal. They lived thus happy and confident, and intoxicating themselves with heavenly hopes. Sometimes they climbed the heights at the close of day and made the echoes of the valley resound with their religious songs. In 1647, they had to surrender the cloisters to a bevy of nuns, for whom the house of Port Royal at Paris became too small. Sent thither and they retired to the *Granges*, near the summit of the mountain. Port Royal des Champs then presented a double aspect, conforming with its double origin; a colony of pious men back to back to a convent.

Who does not feel moved and attracted at the sight of such a picture? Let us, however, go among these men, let us follow them into history and we shall be astonished at the savage nature of their doctrines, and at the poisons that they mingled with the benefits of their influence.

How can we read without indignation and affright in the *Dictionnaire du Jansenism*, the maxims which show and contain the spirit of the sect? "Jesus Christ no more died for the safety of those who are not elect, than he did for the safety of the devil."‡ "God having a foresight of original sin was enabled to predestinate some and to reject others,—all this is arbitrary with God."§ "God has made by his will this frightful difference between the elect and the castaways."|| "God alone causes every thing in us."¶ "Man being criminal, without the aid of grace, is under the necessity of sinking,"** etc., etc.

These propositions, moreover, and many others of the same kind which are developed in the works of the Jansenists, had their source in the *Augustinus*. According to its author, liberty had never fully existed except with the first man. But by the abuse he had made of it, he had, by his fall, lost all his descendants in himself; consequently man, since the original sin, had had a nature fundamentally corrupt, a will entirely

* *Memoires de Fontaine*, t. 1. p. 151.

† *Ibid.* t. 1. p. 221.

‡ *Jansenius de Gra. Christ*, t. 3. lib. 3. chap. 21. p. 166. Collect. 2. littera, A.

§ *Boursier, Action de Dieu sur les creatures*, sec. 6. par. 3. chap. 4.

|| *Nicole, de la Grace et de la Predestination*, t. 1. sec. 2. chap. 4.

¶ *Le Tourneur, Explication de l'Épître de Saint Cyriaque*, t. 3. p. 310. *Figures de la Bible par Royanmont*, Fig. 30.

** *Gerberon, Miroir de la piété*, p. 86.

submitted to the empire of evil. It was only grace which could draw him from the bottom of the gulph ; but this benevolent, sovereign, irresistible grace, God, who owed it to no one, gave to certain persons only, through a gratuitous preference, of which no one had the right to demand an account from him. Happy elect ! it was for them, and not for all men, Jesus Christ had died.

One of the inhabitants of Port Royal, Fontaine, relates naively in his memoirs, a conversation which enlightens us as to these strange theories. Saint Cyran having come to Port Royal to see Antoine le Maître, as they were one day conversing about the paths of salvation, they were suddenly interrupted by a great noise. It was a peasant calling for assistance for his wife in child-birth, whose infant was about to die. Antoine le Maître immediately asked Saint Cyran what he thought of infants who died thus, on the very threshold of life ; to which Saint Cyran, according to the statement of Fontaine, which we cannot suspect, replied, " It is certain that the devil possesses the soul of a small child in the womb of its mother."*

Of what use then could the Jansenist fatalism be to those whom hunger pursues, whom an excess of toil weakens, whose intellect is condemned to uncultivation, and whom society allows to groan in its lowest depths ? Why should we not be resigned to the sight of millions of men plunged into misery without escape, when we believe there are millions of souls destined in advance to endless punishment ? Was it not very natural to conclude the fatality of misery, from the fatality of damnation ? Sinister deductions ! whose effects the fate of the people should inevitably feel, and on whose depths we cannot meditate too much. But if Jansenism tended to consecrate and almost sanctify the tyranny of things, in return it led straight on to the destruction of the tyranny of man. Who has the right of absolute command, where obedience is only possible towards God ?

Up to this point there is nothing in the Jansenists which we have not already remarked in Calvin and his disciples. But the Protestants had been completely logical, the Jansenists were only half so. The Protestants had rejected the pope ; the Jansenists threatened him and submitted to him. Jansenius, in his famous book, had made this solemn declaration : " I have determined to follow to my last moments, as I have done from my childhood, the Roman church, the successor of Peter."† The disciples following the example of the master, were careful how they broke completely with Rome. When, on the 1st of June, 1653, Pope Innocent the Tenth condemned the five propositions in which the doctrine of the *Augustinus* was contained, as heretical and blasphemous, it was an excellent opportunity for the Jansenists to declare open war on the papacy. What did they do however ? They confined themselves to maintaining that the condemned propositions were not contained in the work of their master ; and when a bull of Alexander the Seventh affirmed the contrary, they thought they had heaped up the measure of permitted hardship in asking, if the infallibility of the pope extended

* *Memoires de Fontaine*, t. 2. p. 79.

† *Cornelii Jansenii Augustinus*, t. 3. lib. 1. chap. 2.

to a simple question of fact.* And with what passion did they repulse the reproach of Calvinism? How anxious were they to show that they were separated from the Protestants by the sacraments of order, the Eucharist and penance. The horror of Saint Cyran for heresy was so sincere, that he never opened an heretical book, until he had exorcised it with the sign of the cross, not doubting that the devil dwelt in it.†

Jansenism was then but a bastard Protestantism, but a species of compromise between the principle of individualism and the principle of authority.

But it is this very thing which gives to it its importance in history. Thanks to its mixed nature, Jansenism suited high burgherism, that burgherism of the parliament, which, placed between royalty and the people, wished for neither monarchical absolutism, nor popular equality.

Thus the sect recruited principally among the advocates of parliament, the sons of the masters of accounts and gentlemen of the long robe. It was the imposing and numerous family of the Arnaulds, which formed the first, the true nucleus of Port Royal, and gave the tone to Jansenism. Port Royal reproduced the severe and restrained habits of the French magistracy in all their coldness and traditional gravity. There was no *abandon*; the respect of etiquette iced the language of even the most tender affections. "Sir, my father," wrote Antoine le Maître‡ to his father, and addressing himself to Saint Elme he said, "Sir, my very dear brother."§ Such traits are characteristic. Restrained violence, a rigid exterior, an ascetic piety though softened and distracted by love of letters, a taste for a meditative life, combated by the attraction of agitations, a depth of harshness, a spirit of intolerance united to factious impulses, much disdain for the people, and with it a manifest tendency to humble courtiers and hold kings at bay. Such was the physiognomy of Jansenism. Was it not that of the parliament?

It was then entirely natural that the risings of the magistracy against the court, that the pretensions of the parliament to a share of power, should have found support in the disciples of Saint Cyran; and it is this which explains why, during the Fronde, Jansenism palpitated in the leaders of revolted Paris. The Duke de Luynes, who was a member of the superior council of the Fronde, and René Bernard de Sévigné, who commanded the regiment raised by the Coadjutor de Retz, were zealous Jansenists; the coadjutor himself, the friend of Antoine Arnauld, maintained close relations with Port Royal, and the Duchess de Longueville was only separated from Jansenism by the gallantries, whose scandal she then exhausted.

The political spirit which animated the Jansenists appeared moreover very clearly when, on the 18th of December, 1652, the coadjutor, become Cardinal de Retz, was thrown into the dungeon of Vincennes. At this news, according to the author of the *Histoire de l'Eglise de Paris*, whose testimony Petitot recalls and confirms,|| the Jansenists took fire.

* Ranke, *Hist. de la Papauté*, t. 4, p. 443.

† Sainte Beuve *Port Royal*, t. 2, liv. 2. p. 190.

‡ *Mémoires de Fontaine*, t. 1. p. 235.

§ *Ibid.* p. 359.

|| *Notice sur Port Royal*, p. 93.

Solemn prayers were offered up at Port Royal for the liberty of the prisoner. There was an outbreak among the canons of Notre Dame and the curates of Paris, most of whom were already gained over to Jansenism. Orders were given to expose the holy sacrament, and to chant a mournful psalm daily, so as to strike the imagination of the multitude. As the approaching death of the archbishop of Paris was daily looked for, and as his nephew the Cardinal de Retz was interested in being informed at once of the event, a Jansenist priest was placed about him, who, whilst saying mass to him, studied to foil the vigilance of the guards. "It was agreed that as soon as the archbishop was dead, the priest, in reading the part of the canon in which are prayers for all the powers, should raise his hand higher than usual and say these words: *Johannes, Franciscus, Paulus antistes noster*, which would convey the news to the prisoner, since the name of Paul alone distinguished him from his uncle."* The plan was well conceived, and was executed. It was of no consequence, however, since it failed to attain the end. The archbishop of Paris died at four o'clock in the morning; the chapter of Notre Dame assembled at five. But to enable some one to take possession of the See in the absence and name of the cardinal, a power of attorney from him was necessary; they had recourse to a forgery, with which the principal of the college *des Grassins*, consented to load his conscience. De Tellier suddenly entered the church. He came on the part of the minister to require the chapter to assume the government of the diocese. It was too late; ten o'clock was striking, and the bulls of the new archbishop were already fulminating from the pulpit. Never had more shameful trickery served the ambition of a most scandalous pastor; and yet the pious daughters of Port Royal did not conceal their joy. The Cardinal de Retz, having been transferred from the *doujon* of Vincenne to the castle of Nancy, soon afterwards escaped, thanks to the zeal of the Jansenist Sévigné, and the Jansenists united with the Frondeurs to alarm Paris by the noise of their gladness.† An author of the time, who speaks with the double authority of a witness and an actor, relates, that whilst Cardinal de Retz was at Rotterdam, a man named Saint Gilles went to him, on behalf of the Jansenists, to press him to unite his own cause to theirs.‡ And still further, the same author attributes to the Port Royalists, the letter of reproaches which the fiery chief of the Fronde lanced against Mazarin from his exile.§

We must admit, however, that the complicity of the Jansenists in the troubles of the Fronde was not direct or striking. It was a complicity of hopes. But what concerns our attention is, that the enemy of whom the Frondeurs sought to rid themselves in the political sphere, was the same against whom the Jansenists were armed in the religious. That enemy was the old principle of authority, represented for the first, by the absolute monarchy, for the second, by the Jesuits.

In attacking the Jesuits, Jansenism only pursued under another form, the war declared by the parliament against royalty. The Jesuits sus-

* Petitot, Notice sur Port Royal, p. 94.

† Memoirs de Guy Joli, t. 2. p. 64.

‡ Ibid. p. 97.

§ Ibid. t. 2. p. 76.

tained the throne; the Jansenists served as a support for high burgherism, already anxious to put the throne in tutelage.

Now to what means had the Jesuits resorted to induce the yoke of the principle of authority to be accepted? To the attractions of an easy morality. It was necessary then to decry their morality, in order to disarm them. The Jansenists applied themselves to this with ardor. The question of knowing whether the five propositions were or were not in the book of Jansenius, the half century of contest springing from this ridiculous and famous question, the persecutions which it drew upon Antoine Arnauld, the condemnation of this doctor by the Sorbonne, would merit but disdain or pity, if it had not all served to mask, by multiplying them, the blows under which the principle of authority was finally to succumb.

One day, Antoine Arnauld when reading to his friends an article which he had composed in his defence, perceived that his audience remained cold. Turning then towards a solitary, with a vast forehead, and a look full of thought, he said to him, "But you who are young, you will do something."* Pascal did the provincial letters.

Who shall describe the effect of these incomparable letters? When beneath the disguise of a pseudonymic, they appeared blow on blow; when they shone forth, there was but a single cry of surprise and admiration in Paris. Who was that powerful unknown who appeared to have invented the true style of irony and anger? Who was that Louis de Montalte, who with such formidable delight denounced to men the snares of the Casuists, their theory of mental restrictions, their *probabilism*, the approval with which they covered over the most cowardly capitulations of conscience, in fine, all their fraudulent morality? The government was disturbed by such a book and proscribed it. High burgherism applauded it whilst laughing; the Jesuits were struck to the earth.

It may be asked how it happened that the Jesuits were unable to defend themselves, they who then held the power in their hand, and who in the immense net of a devoted espionage, kept society as it were its prisoner. The talent displayed in the letters explains completely the splendor of their success, it does not explain their impunity.

The truth is that the book of Pascal owed its fortune in part to the sympathies of a rising class, whose interests it served. High burgherism understood that the cause of Jansenism was here its own, that in order to take absolute power from kings, it was necessary to wrest the government of families from Jesuits as their spiritual directors. The authority of kings was the military force; the Jesuits had to induce their acceptance, that soft indulgence which gently attracted deceived souls beneath their empire. The parliament which had for a long time opposed the right of remonstrances to the military force, was delighted to have the severity of Port Royal to oppose to the dangerous attractions of Molinism.

Thus, what happened? The provincial letters found numerous proteo-

* Petitot, notice sur Port Royal, p. 121.

tors in high burgherism, and a secret but active complicity in Parliament. The advocate-general inclined to Jansenism, and in a recent discourse had half betrayed his secret leaning; the first president, de Bellièvre went further; an assiduous reader of the provincial letters, he was charmed by them, and ordered the seals put on the press of one of the booksellers of Port Royal to be taken off. In a note of M. de St. Gilles, the principal agent of the clandestine publication of these letters, we read: "It was necessary at first to use concealment, and there was danger in it; but in the course of two months every body, and *the magistrates themselves*—he might have said *the magistrates especially*—taking great pleasure in seeing the morality of the Jesuits treated plainly, in these pieces of wit, there was more freedom and less danger in it."* In fact, the alliance was already so close between Jansenism and the Parliament, that to reach the ear of the Counsellors of the Great Chamber, petitioners went straight to Port Royal.† Nothing was more natural, for Jansenism was the Parliament in the Church.

The great victory of the provincial letters was then the result and the proof of the increasing importance of high burgherism.

The Jesuits, however, recovered gradually from their first consternation. "Your ruin," Pascal had exclaimed to them with a terrible voice, "your ruin will be like that of a high wall which tumbles down with an unforeseen fall, and like that of an earthen vessel, which is broken and crushed in all its parts, by an effort so strong and general, that there will not remain a fragment with which one can draw a little water, or on which one can carry a little fire, because you have afflicted the heart of justice."‡ Behold the effort the Jesuits made to escape from this eloquent prophecy.

An *apology for the Casuists*, which they had risked, having been condemned, first by the Sorbonne, and then at Rome, they changed their tactics, and endeavored to compromise the papacy for ever in their quarrel, by putting it at issue with the Jansenists, upon the question of infallibility in matters of faith. From thence arose the idea of a formulary which they imposed on ecclesiastics, communities, and instructors of youth, and which was drawn up in these terms, by Marca, the archbishop of Toulouse: "I condemn with heart and mouth, the five propositions of Cornelius Jansenius, contained in his book, called *Augustinus*, which the pope and the bishops have condemned, which doctrine is not that of Saint Augustine, which Jansenius has badly explained, and contrary to the true meaning of that doctor." This was intended to throw the Jansenists into the alternative of braving Rome or abdicating. They did not hesitate. To resist the pope without abasing him, suited their interests and passions, as it suited the interest and passions of the parliament to cripple royalty without destroying it.

The struggle then began, and allies were not wanting to the Jansenists. Four bishops sided with them openly, violently. Their cries were repeated by the regular canons of Sainte Geneviève, by the Benedictines of Saint Germain des Prés, by the Oratorians and some Chartreux. The

* Note quoted by M. Sainte-Beuve, Port Royal, t. 2, p. 564.

† Ibid. p. 563.

‡ Letter 16.

clergy had a fair opportunity to hold general assemblies, the pope to launch bulls, the court to make threats. Nothing could conquer a resistance in which political zeal was mixed up with monkish fanaticism; and the church of France, troubled and uncertain, heard the bellowing of opinion rise around it. The opposition was especially ardent among the nuns of Port Royal, *pure as angels*, according to the expression of Perefixe, but *proud as devils*.^{*} These daughters, who called themselves the humble servants of Christ, displayed a zeal in rejecting the formulary and distinguishing the question of right from that of fact, which resisted the exhortations of Bossuet himself.[†] They essayed in vain to turn their scruples aside, and the grand vicars composed a new formulary, less peremptory than the old, expressly for them. But "from dread alone of being compelled to sign it, several were taken sick."[‡] The sister of Pascal died of it.[§]

Obscure debates, it will perhaps be said, scenes of a revolted convent. But why? Politics had a share in them, and public opinion surrounded Port Royal with active sympathy. For a long time no one was spoken of but Mother Angelique; her stoicism, her pious courage, her letter to the queen, a letter worthy of Saint Theresa, and which the Roman soul of Cornelia would not have disavowed. The opposite party had also its fanatics. A society of devotees was formed at Caen, which under the name of the *Hermits of Caen*, combatted Jansenism with an exaltation bordering on delirium. It had singular, monstrous spectacles. Gerberon narrates that one day a demoiselle N., having wound an under garment around her head, and with naked feet assembled some laymen, young girls and seven priests, who reversed their cassocks and used the bark of trees for girdles. In this style they went as far as Seez, and made the tour of the city, exclaiming, "Lord have pity on us, and convert the Jansenists."|| There was too much noise about it for the budding despotism of Louis the Fourteenth. The death of Mazarin, in 1661, having rendered the monarch active and free, he took the tone of a master with Port Royal. A letter de cachet enjoined on the religious of both monasteries to dismiss their candidates and boarders, and the small schools were suppressed. It was too late; Jansenism was already radiating afar. The mass of burgherism had not, it is true, adopted it on account of the rigidity which it derived from its theological origin; but it was incarnated in high burgherism; it possessed the parliament. Thus Louis the Fourteenth afterwards committed a gross error in thinking to annihilate it, by demolishing a cloister whose very tombs even he did not respect. Jansenism was to survive its persecutor, and to hoot after the monarch on his way to Saint Denis.

When people remain thus impassioned for a long time, they are not pure chimeras which move them. Whatever may be human folly, it is not going on for ever to fill up history with foolish battles and vain tumults. In the succession of ages, in which minutes are sometimes so valuable, it cannot be that a whole century is useless.

^{*} Racine, *Hist. de Port Royal*, p. 354.

[†] Gerberon, *Hist. Generale du Jansenism*, t. 3. p. 114. Amsterdam, 1700.

[‡] Racine, *Hist. de Port Royal*, p. 269.

[§] *Ibid.*

|| Gerberon, *Hist. Generale du Jansenisme*, t. 2. p. 449.

CHAPTER V.

PROGRESS OF BURGHERISM.

ADMINISTRATION OF COLBERT.

Colbert the tutor of burgherism—Necessity for his mission, and wisdom of his regulations—He impresses activity on the nation—France in the number of producing people—How we should judge of the protective system adopted by Colbert—The question of free exchange insoluble under any other doctrine than that of fraternity—Ingratitude of the reproaches levelled at the memory of Colbert by the *let-alone* school—In proportion as burgherism is elevated royalty declines.

MAZARIN died, offering his immense fortune to Louis the Fourteenth; Colbert and fifty millions. The king divided this heritage of the cardinal into two parts; he took Colbert and refused the millions.

What a contrast between the servant and the master; the latter, radiant with youth and of an easy disposition, elegant, fastidious, impatient to shine, and handsome enough to be loved by La Vallière, without her thinking of his being king; the other severe and simple, hardened to labor and persevering in thought; slow to perceive, but never forgetting. A lofty forehead, marked and harsh features, indicated in Colbert intellectual labors, a restrained violence, and a will that knew not how to bend. And yet this burgher of Rheims, rude and unmannered, became the friend, the intimate confidant of a king who was the flower of gentlemen. In their private interviews, whilst the prince was recounting his amours, the plebeian was developing his capacity and his plans. By turns in the employ of a trader of Lyons, an attorney's clerk, a clerk of escheats, steward of Mazarin, Colbert unites in himself the strong qualities of the middle classes; the exactness of the accountant, the application of the merchant, the boldness of the speculator, and the prudence of the man of business. Careful of the interest of another, jealous of his own, he is a skilful steward and an interested calculator. But these qualities will have nothing common-place about them; they are about to enlarge, to take the proportions of genius. What is still wanting to Colbert? To be a minister. Having attained power, he will perceive his very virtues ennobled, and every thing will speak of his greatness. He is no longer to manage the wealth of a cardinal carefully, but to administer the riches of a kingdom; the purse he has to keep is the public treasury; the commercial house to conduct, is the monarchy. Imposing speculations, for which Europe and the two Indies are to furnish the theatre. Thus, for the true statesman to mount upwards is to increase, for the extent of the horizon depends on the elevation of the point of sight.

The place which Colbert was to render illustrious, was occupied by a person difficult to overthrow, the superintendent Fouquet; an amiable

and scandalous millionaire, who, under the very eyes of Louis the Fourteenth, exercised the royalty of gold, set off by the prestige of talent. A mad rival of his monarch, the superintendent made pretensions to eclipse him by prodigious luxury. Under favor of great disorder in the finances, he took, without counting, and without rendering an account,* *he made more pensions than the king.*† Soon intoxicated by the splendors which he commanded, by the device which his pride invented, *que non ascendam?* he dreamed of recommencing the Fronde, fortified Belle-Isle, kept guards, not fearing to expose his speculations, humiliating the restless pride of Louis the Fourteenth by the magnificence of his fêtes, and doing the honors of a bankrupt state to the king himself. Great prevencations are a safeguard. It required four months of silent preparation to be enabled to arrest Fouquet.‡ Louis the Fourteenth was compelled to hatch a vast plot against his minister, and in order to seize him as a traitor, it was necessary to employ treason. Until the last moment he dissimulated, received him kindly, smiled on him; but on the appointed day the king is at Nantes; two barks descend the Loire, one carrying Fouquet, the other Colbert and the fortune of France. The superintendent is arrested, judged, imprisoned for life, and his misfortune is so great that it awakens compassion in the mind. Pelisson was eloquent about it; and La Fontaine, remembering the generosity of his friend, hastened to believe him innocent, because he saw him unfortunate.

But there was a man at court whose inexorable probity did not pardon Fouquet. It was Colbert. In his eyes, so many follies constituted crimes, and he urged the condemnation of the culprit with a zeal whose excess he had better have hidden. For, if we must say so, it was one of the crimes of Fouquet, that he had been the brilliant rival of Colbert.

Be it as it may, the signal was given; every thing was to assume a new aspect; burgherism in person conducts the affairs. A courageous honesty, but rendered fierce by circumstances, announces the advent of Colbert. A chamber of justice, instituted by a violent edict, prepares exemplary justice for whomsoever shall be *convicted of malversation in our finances, and of having impoverished our provinces.*§ says the preamble. Suspected fortunes are to be controlled; their origin to be sought for and discovered. Every one who has touched the public property, from the proud accomplices of Fouquet to the lowest tax collector, must furnish a sworn statement of his property, of the inheritances he has received, and of the sums given by him in marriage to his children. Every one must show his actions to the light of day, and unfortunate are those who, by the vanity of their profusions, shall have already betrayed an unlawful opulence.

Thus willed Colbert, and the farmers of the revenue are at once flying or in prison. Some are condemned to death; and whilst Fouquet volun-

* *Memoires de l'Abbé de Choisy*, t. 1. p. 215, Edit. Menmerqué.

† The phrase of the Abbé Fouquet. See the curious notice of Fouquet, by M. Clement, in his *Histoire de la vie et de l'Administration de Colbert*, a work very rich in valuable documents.

‡ *Instructions au Dauphin*, in the works of Louis the Fourteenth.

§ Edict of November, 1661.

tarily couched upon straw, expiates his depredations by repentance,* Colbert regrets that he has not sent such a culprit to the scaffold.†

This was a decisive moment for France. To reduce by two-thirds the annuities on the Hotel de Ville, to lower from a thousand livres to three hundred,‡ the capital of the income derived from taxes, to break up all the markets of Fouquets, to confiscate the octrois of the cities, to resume the alienated domains, was, without doubt, a terrible inauguration of good order; but it arrested a general bankruptcy. An hundred and ten millions restored by the farmers of the revenue,§ re-entered the treasury; speculators, who had enriched themselves by the public distress, those who had purchased the octrois at a fraudulent price, false creditors, were sacrificed to the safety of a state they were devouring, and Colbert laid down principles which, a century later, were to save the French Revolution.

Happy influence of probity in a great character. The presence of an honest man was enough to bring ancient despotism to terms. Enough is not known in our days of what were then called *ordonnances de comptant*. They were the secret funds of the old monarchy, sometimes twenty-four millions a year.|| The sovereign alone knew how the money was expended; and these words, *accounted into the hands of the king*, covered the corruption. Three hundred and eighty-four millions were expended in five years by false ordinances and forged orders of account.¶ Such disorder could not be continued beneath the eyes of Colbert; the administration was reformed; a council of finance centralized the direction, and the king determined to sign the *comptants* after an examination of the motives, and thus to remain responsible, if not to the chamber of accounts, at least to his own conscience. The acquittances were to be burned every year in the presence of the king,** as if he had feared the scrutiny of posterity; but a ray was to lighten up these dark finances. Despotism is all of a piece. For fear lest its absolute powers should be lopped off, it prepares the way for their inevitable fall.

Having thus opened his path, Colbert went to work. The plans of Richelieu here re-appeared. What the cardinal had foreseen, commenced or predicted, Colbert realized, and his works astonish us by their variety, their extent, and especially by the unity observable in them.

Colbert decided it, the king willed it, that all nations should surrender the secrets of their manufactures, and soon see themselves surpassed by the workmen whom the discipline of Colbert had fashioned. From one is snatched the art of tempering steel, from another that of baking and enamelling clay. The Van Robais came from Holland to found manufactories of fine cloth at Abbeville; Althen brought us from Pisa the art of dying with madder,†† and England sells us the secret of stocking

* Lemontey, t. 5. aux pieces justificatives, p. 241, comp. edit. Sautoley, 1829.

† Memorial de Colbert ou Testament Politique. Hist. de Colbert, par M. de Serviez.

‡ Pothier et de Thou, recherches sur l'origine de l'impot, p. 194.

§ Manuscript Journal of the Sieur d'Ormesson, quoted by M. Clement.

|| Forbonnais, Rech. sur les Finances, t. 1. p. 267. years 1655, et suiv.

¶ D'Audiffret, Syst. Fin. de la France, t. 2. p. 420.

** All of them were not. See l'Etat du comptant, extracted from the archives, by M. Clement, p. 129, in his Histoire de Colbert.

†† Henri Martin, Hist. de France, t. 14. p. 690.

weaving, which we had lost, after having invented it;* at Beauvais, the Gobelins produce tapestry hangings, which shall efface those of Flanders, and the carpets of Persia are surpassed at la Savonnerie. The fabrics of Sedan and d'Aubusson had fallen down, Colbert raises them up, and that no one may remain unemployed, he invites hundreds of young girls to the northern provinces, whose delicate hands will be employed in making lace, embroideries, and the point-lace of Genoa and England, and shall enrich the cities of Rheims, Chateau Thierry, Loudan, Arras and Alençon, by their needle-work. French point-lace is made at Auxerre; in compliance with a despatch from Colbert,† the authorities recompense the girls who enter without delay on manufacturing. Lyons and Tours manufacture stuffs of silk and gold, which had before been brought at great expense from Italy, and of which Paris alone consumed more than Spain.§ The people are at work everywhere. Here they learn to refine metals, to beat copper and tin smooth, to dress skins; there they are engaged in making glass, further on in improving it, and the Venitian ambassador being conducted to the Faubourg Saint Antoine, was astonished at our large and beautiful Venetian plate-glass. Thus the will of Colbert impresses a manufacturing movement on the nation, breathes activity into it, communicates a fever to it, and introduces trades throughout all France.

Manufacturing is, beyond doubt, of great antiquity in France, and our historical monuments could offer, if necessary, traces of it which could astonish. But we must be permitted to believe that industrial pursuits had never very deep root in our soil, since, from reign to reign, manufactures are seen to disappear,|| and branches of commerce to become annihilated. Sully thought that *labor and food are the two teats of the state*, a maxim whose insufficiency struck Henry the Fourth, who was less moral, but more intelligent than Sully. Thus, whilst his minister was regretting the establishment of plantations of mulberry trees,|| Henry the Fourth was encouraging some manufactories of tapestries and fabrics of cloth, like those of Holland. But the tendencies of Sully drew him away. The troubles of the Fronde interfered with the work Richelieu had commenced, and until the advent of Colbert, France was essentially an agricultural country.

It was the nobility who principally possessed the soil; their rule had immovable property for its foundation. The importance given to manufacturing or moveable property, was then the great means for the development of burgherism. This was the blow which the continuator of his *red eminency*, the Richelieu of peace, was to strike against the conquerors of the Fronde.

And if Colbert drew the first of gentlemen into the execution of his designs, it was because it pleased Louis the Fourteenth to see a rival

* D'Audifret, Syst. Fin. de la France, t. 2. p. 431.

† Voltaire, Siècle de Louis Fourteenth, chap. 29.

‡ Despatch of August, 1670, cited by M. Clement, p. 233.

§ A Memorial addressed to the assembly of notables of 1626, cited in Forbonnais, t. 1. p. 185.

|| Mirabeau le père, Réponse a la Voirie. It will be found printed at the end of l'Ami des hommes, t. 6. p. 103.

¶ Forbonnais, ubi supra, p. 45. Annés, 1601, 1602.

power springing up to those nobles who had troubled his minority, and who had made him journey when a child amid so many dangers, and in such diverse dresses.

To renew the arts, so long forgotten, it was necessary to furnish instructions to novices, to give them skill in them; Colbert drew his from the best sources. Armed with an heroic courage, he himself learned how to fabricate plate glass, tapestries, crystal ware, point of Venice, cloth, serge, druggets, light stuffs; he understood the quality of goods, their suitable length and breadth, and the goodness of their coloring. Once in possession of the knowledge which, thanks to his iron will, he had acquired, he gave to it the force of regulations, and formed by it the tissue of luminous ordinances, which, sure of convincing, impatient of obedience, he resolutely enforced. If he bent his robust genius to the observation of a thousand details, which now appear superfluous to our experience; if he were despotic in his edicts; if he organized new companies of tradesmen, nothing marks more distinctly the vigilant interest which he took in manufactures. He only governed so with a view to their future greatness, and because he wished them to be flourishing, trustworthy and superior. If it was to encourage, he was liberal, magnificent. Twelve hundred livres to every dye-shop; six pistoles to the workman who married within the circumference of his manufactory, and then two pistoles on the birth of his first child; to the apprentice become a companion, thirty livres and his tools,* which were sacred instruments, that no creditor could seize, and which justice even dared not approach. Aid, lodging, advancements, privileges, Colbert spared nothing to stimulate. If there is a necessity for punishment, he is inexorable. Whoever fabricates defective goods, injures the ignorant consumer who buys them; Colbert, in his zeal, ordered† that bad goods should be exposed on a stake, then be *burned, torn up, or confiscated*; for he wished to establish good faith as a principle, honor as a recompense, shame as a punishment.

We should be deceived, if, from the violence of these measures, we should judge the soul of Colbert inaccessible to every sentiment of kindness. That severity ruled in him, cannot be denied; and he showed it even in his intercourse with his children, whom he chastised with a cane.‡ But harsh as was that countenance, whose sinister looks made Madame de Sévigné grow pale,§ and disconcerted solicitors, he was not destitute of sensibility. One day, when looking at the country, this *man of marble*|| was suddenly seized with a movement of melancholy tenderness, and allowing some tears to escape him, exclaimed, "I would that this country was happy, that abundance reigned throughout the kingdom, that every one in it was contented, and that without employment, without dignity, banished from Versailles, the grass should grow in my courtyard."¶

* Clement, Hist. de Colbert, p. 235.

† Ibid. p. 234.

‡ Letter of Bussy Rabutin, referred to in the Histoire de Paris, by Duawre, Tableau Moral, sur Louis quatorze.

§ She called him *Le Nord*. See Lemontey, t. 5, p. 243.

|| Expression of Guy Patin, Hist. de la Marine, by Eugène Sue.

¶ Eloge de Colbert, par . . . 1773, Geneva. Eloge du Mems, par Necker, t. 15, des œuvres, 1821.

The severity of Colbert arose moreover from his ardent solicitude for the interest of that burgherism, whose minister he was; he remembered the time when still young, he had gone to Lyons to learn the trade of his grandfather. The grandson of the wool-dealer of Rheims, had, in the court of Louis the Fourteenth, descended to the weakness of paying a genealogist; but he proved well, by the ensemble of his conduct, that respect for his origin had not abandoned him.*

Thus, how he watches over every thing which touches on commerce. How careful he is to write to the intendants, *to be rather a little duped by the merchants than to oppress commerce.*† How he holds to the freedom of the great fairs, when he recommends *excessive address and vigilance not to separate sellers and buyers.*‡ The ordinance on commerce is a monument of that austere and fruitful disquietude. The education of apprentices, the duties of masters, the qualities of goods, the qualities of the raw materials, contracts, books of accounts, nothing is forgotten. Consular tribunals are multiplied for the advantage of the merchant, arbitrations§ are empowered, compound interest is condemned,|| bills of exchange are submitted to the competency of consuls. Burgherism can now spring forward in commercial pursuits; the merchant is guarded against his three great enemies, bad faith, chicanery, usury.

Such were the services Colbert rendered to the middle classes. It was for them, that in the assembled parliament he distributed shares in the India Company;¶ for them, that awakening at the break of day he sought the imperial formula for his formidable regulations; for them, that he had accustomed Louis the Fourteenth to leave Montespan or Fontange, when the hour had arrived, to calculate tariffs at the council board. And now that burgherism has attained strength, now that it has reached success, why does it not in its turn embrace the people in that solicitude by which it profited so happily, when the triumphant royalty of Louis the Fourteenth extended to it its hand, took it under its shield, gave it credit and instruments of labor, taught it the sciences, manufactures, and navigation, dug for it ports, opened for it seas, and led it to India beneath the flag which Duquesne caused to be respected.

Let us measure with our eye the distance already passed over. Burgherism has taken an immense stride; it has become a producing people. But how will it obtain the raw materials which our soil does not furnish? Shall it abandon the seas to the sixteen thousand vessels of the Hollanders?*** Shall it renounce the profits of transportation? And how will the excess of our merchandize be carried away?

Colbert had already resolved these questions in his mind. Like Richelieu, he had turned his attention to the colonies; he saw our shores

* See the curious manuscript in the Royal Library, so carefully erased by the son of Colbert, and discovered by Eugene Sue, who published a fac simile of it in the *Hist. de la Marine*.

† Sent by Colbert to M. de Souzi, intendant of Flanders, referred to in Forbonnais, *Rech. sur les Finances*, t. 1, p. 139.

‡ *Instruct. aux Commis des Manufactures*, quoted by M. Clement, *ubi supra*.

§ Titre 4 de l'Ordonnance du Commerce.

¶ *Manuscript Journal of M. D'Ormesson*, cited above.

|| Titre, 6.

*** Despatch of Colbert to M. de Pomponne. "The French," says the despatch, "had but six hundred."

bathed by the seas; he knew that the invigoration of labor within, calls forth a glow without. He then reared up the marine, which Mazarin had suffered to go to ruins, or rather he created it anew, crowning his creation by the immortal ordinance of 1681. He found the fleet composed of thirty ships* of war, of which three only carried seventy guns, and he left a navy of two hundred and seventy-six vessels, afloat or building.†

It was then the genius of Colbert which served as a basis for the diplomacy of Lyonne, and the grand policy of Louis the Fourteenth. Whilst the king of France was determining to reestablish his moral influence on the ocean, fighting Ruyter with Duquesne, bombarding Algiers and negotiating the ransom of Dunkirk from the English, his minister was marvellously developing his vast designs. The two navies were in his eyes but one. The naval ambition of Louis the Fourteenth required sailors; merchant ships furnished them to him. The mercantile navy had need of protection and security; the ships of war served it for an escort, and the sea was cleared of pirates. Establishing thus the indestructible connection of the two, Colbert ordered that sailors should pass alternately from one to the other, and should change the service every two years;‡ an admirable conception, which substituted maritime entries for the barbarous custom of press gangs. But how to engage in the details of this immense organization§ before which the mind stops alarmed? How can we conceive that a single man could have effected it, when we remember that before the time of Colbert, France imported its naval munitions, even to its anchors, sails, cables, cordage, saltpetre, its powder for cannon, from Holland?||

Colbert has been made the very personification of the protective system, and the writers of burgherism have spared neither serious attacks, nor too easy raileries upon this minister. In the camp of the free traders (*let-alone system*), we shall find the economists of the eighteenth century, Quesnay, Turgot, the revolutionists of 89, the English school, the constituent assembly, all the powers of the third estate, and we shall hear them exclaim: "What is the advantage of so many regulations and tariffs by which governments wish to protect us? Their forecast oppresses us, their solicitude tires us; let them leave the field to us—success to the strong, ill-fortune to the vanquished." But by what means has burgherism become enabled to speak thus with impunity? To whom does it owe its strong virility and its bold freedom to promenade the world? Where would it have been now, if, still weak, ignorant and unexercised, Colbert had not labored for sixteen hours¶ a day during twenty-two years, in his tariffs, his custom-house regulations, his mercantile negotiations?

In judging this great man, the circumstances which he had to command, are too much forgotten, and that the question of free exchange could not be separated from the general state of the world.

Let us suppose for a moment the whole world reconciled. An eternal

* Argenda de Marine, Colbert, a manuscript in the Royal Library, brought to light in his *Histoire de la Marine*, t. 4. chap. 4. † Ibid.

‡ Ordinance of the 17th of September, 1665.

§ See the *Principes de Colbert sur la Marine*, a manuscript of 700 pages, which is but a summary of the labors of Colbert, Archives de la Marine in Eugene Sae, t. 4.

|| Lafont de Saint Yenne, *L'ombre du grand Colbert*, p. 95.

¶ Clement, *Hist. de Colbert*, p. 147.

peace has been promised to the human race; hatreds are appeased and dead; rivalries are extinguished; war has been rendered forever impossible. Nations form no longer but one immense family, destined to share among themselves, by constant exchange, the fruits of the world; and this division, which raises the level of common enjoyments, assures of itself concord among the people, the effect becoming in its turn the cause.

In these vast data, which we are accustomed to call a dream, the problem so much agitated finds a natural solution. When the sun of the tropics matures the sugar cane in the Antilles, why will the European fatigue himself in extracting, by the means of costly apparatus, the sugar which a plant in his garden contains? Has not every production of the earth a country of its choice? Have not coffee, generous wines, tea, vanilla a country? And why then shall we raise with difficulty, in factitious climates, productions, which, outside of our custom-houses, a suitable temperature gives to us spontaneously and better? Free exchange is then one of the benefits of the system of fraternity.

But when competition is unchained in the world, the question assumes immediately a different aspect. Then there is an urgency, a duty for every prudent sovereign, head of a republic or minister of an absolute monarch, a Cromwell or a Colbert, to protect the people whom he governs against the chances of a struggle in which the weakest always perishes. It was war which has created a necessity for entrenched camps; prohibition is an entrenched camp, because competition is a war. The economists have not been careful, lest they should curse the effect, after having blessed the cause, free exchange being but the principle of fraternity applied to the universe.

What was the commercial state of Europe at the advent of Colbert? The act of navigation, framed by Cromwell, had been renewed by Charles the Second. Prohibition was everywhere. Louis the Fourteenth wrote to M. de Turenne: * *"How are French vessels going to England and Holland treated?"* Turenne replied, "French vessels pay more in England and Holland than those of the country; they endure them there with difficulty, and they cannot take on board merchandize as freight, when there are ships of the country bound on the same voyage, which is not done in France towards them." In fact France had, for a long time, carried, even into its commerce, a sort of chivalric moderation, and had used a generous nonchalance in avenging certain wrongs. The Spanish custom-house levied about fifteen per cent. on merchandize, whilst we levied but two and a half per cent. on that coming from Spain. Whilst the English furnished the whole kingdom with cloth, to the entire ruin of our manufactories, still, says M. de Turenne,† French cloths were seized in England by law. The reception given to our merchants and sailors by foreign commerce, was of a hostile, sometimes insolent jealousy. The English redoubling their severity and rigor towards us, laid a tariff even on the persons of French merchants. In Ireland, a foreigner convicted of having purchased wool for export,

* Questions concerning commerce put by the king to Marshal Turenne in the year 1662. *Œuvres de Louis Fourteenth*, t. 2. p. 399. † *Ubi supra*.

had his arm lopped off.* We must not lose sight of all this, if we wish to render justice to Colbert.

Fouquet, who was not destitute of quickness of perception, had finally replied to so much hostility, and opposed to the navigation act, a tax of fifty sols a ton on foreign vessels which should anchor in our ports. Colbert hastened to adopt this measure, which he knew to be then decisive to revive the mercantile marine, and to give it the coasting trade; he did but obey the laws of his situation, when, in a memorial to the king, he laid down the only scientific rules in custom-house matters; *to reduce the taxes on the export of the products and manufactures of the kingdom; to diminish them on the imports of every thing which enters into manufactures; to keep out by high duties products of foreign manufacture.*

Let us now figure to ourselves Colbert in the centre of the movement he has created. Manufactures, commerce, navigation, colonies, finance, he spans all this alarming ensemble with his strong will. He possesses and sums up in his strong head a living encyclopædia, in which are arranged in good order, the innumerable regulations of industrial pursuits and the details of so many admirable ordinances which were provided for the management of forests, the entry of sailors, the security of the merchant. He knows to a fraction all the merchandize that enters the kingdom, and all that leaves it. He inquires into the abundance of the harvests, in order to permit, moderate or prohibit the exportation of grain;† into the situation of the laborer, to diminish his taxes and increase the number of his beasts.‡ He follows with a restless soul the operations of the India company, the march of our vessels, the success of our fisheries. If Riquet, that other great man falls sick, Colbert is alarmed in the name of the state; how will the marvellous work of the canal of the two seas be accomplished? What other engineer will re-restore the disaster that has occurred at the breakwater of Cape Cette?§ Thus nothing escapes the attention of Colbert. There is no repose for that powerful mind. In the night even, in restlessness and silence, his thoughts review the kingdom, and he still protects it in his vigilant repose.

Who would expect to see an existence thus filled, find place for a taste for art, for the protection of intellect and literature? Richelieu founded the French Academy; Colbert, his indefatigable rival, founded the Academy of Sciences, that of Inscriptions and the School of France at Rome. Richelieu had dreamed of rendering the living language perfect; the dead languages were studied and reconstructed under the auspices of Calvert. Baluze du Cange, sought amidst the ruins of history for the vestiges of a people who are no longer. What will be the use of being noble, of having grandfathers, when, from the top of

* Antoine de Montchrétien, *Traité d'Economie Politique*, quoted by M. Cocha in the *Revue des deux Mondes*, August 1, 1846.

† Necker, *Eloge de Colbert*, t. 15. de ses œuvres, p. 36, et suiv.

‡ Edict of the month of April, 1667, which prohibits beasts from being seized. The taxes were reduced under Colbert from fifty-three to thirty-two millions.

§ Letter from Colbert to the son of Riquet, brought to light in the *Archives de la Marine*, par Clement, p. 210.

the Observatory built by Colbert, plebeians shall have measured the world; when called from Bologna, Cassini shall have commenced with Picard, that meridian which Voltaire calls the finest monument of astronomy;* when the genius of the middling class shall have found a chair in the Academy of Sciences in which to render itself illustrious; in the garden of plants an abridgement of nature to study the universe; an eternally memorable period, in which burgherism, gaining its letters of nobility, produced Corneille and Molière, Racine and La Fontaine, Bossuet, Le Poussin, and inundated with its brilliancy the depotism it was to overthrow.

It is known what was the death of Colbert; he died from his honor being suspected. He had been the mentor and friend of Louis the Fourteenth; he had raised him up, he had flattered him to serve the state; but the outrage of an imprudent word was not pardoned him.

Louis the Fourteenth was about to find himself embarrassed by his own greatness. Whilst burgherism was hastening on with forced marches towards the French revolution on the path marked out by Colbert, the monarchy, left to itself, was declining. Colbert away, Louis the Fourteenth did not know what to do with his pride, and from being the royalty, he remained only the king.

CHAPTER VI.

PROGRESS OF BURGHERISM.

MONARCHY OF LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH.

How Louis the Fourteenth made royalty dependent on burgherism—Louis the Fourteenth, in rendering labor hostile to religion, undermines the power of the clergy—Louis the Fourteenth the real destroyer of absolute monarchy in France; revolutionary bearing of the declaration of 1682—The bull *Unigenitus*, its origin, its introduction into France, its consequences—The results of the personal government of Louis the Fourteenth contrary to his intention.

It is the property and the punishment of despotism to pretend always to be sufficient of itself and to be always powerless. Louis the Fourteenth absorbed every thing so well in himself, that he made the monarchy subject to the accidents and incidents which compose the life of man; he knew how to practise the difficult, the baneful art of royalty with a sovereign majesty and a profoundness that was never equalled; but he rendered it still more baneful and exhausted it; he was so huge an egotist that he crushed every thing; his pride, in order not to become folly, required a counterpoise, and he unfortunately only found it abroad, in the misfortunes of the war of the succession and in the insolence of

* Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis Fourteenth*, chap. 3.

the conqueror. He displayed a true magnanimity, almost one of genius, towards the enemies of France, who were his own. But this loftiness of soul, of which he was the master, and which regulated his conduct with kings who were his equals, he permitted to exalt itself even to delirium before those whom he called his subjects; it pleased him, in the latter part of his reign, to abase those who surrounded him beyond measure, in order the better to exalt himself by the contrast. The superior intellects he had at first encouraged, ended by giving him umbrage, though employed in his own service; and as he now endured nothing great which did not emanate from himself, he surrounded himself with incapable ministers and generals, loving them for their very incapacity. He only required a few years to devour the resources of several reigns; so that towards the close, when his authority had become as immense as his pride, there was no longer any thing about him to sustain him, neither vigorous minds, nor bold characters, nor chosen captains, nor ministers, nor treasures, nor armies, there scarcely remained a people. Power was without bounds and entirely vain,—it was destitute of supports, instruments, almost victims.

The reign of Louis the Fourteenth is too well known to arrest us long. We will only say, that it added to the causes, so ancient, so numerous and so diverse, of the revolution.

And first, the nobility had no more fatal enemy than Louis the Fourteenth.

The Archbishop of Sens replied in 1641 to Richelieu when he demanded six millions from the clergy:—"The ancient usage of the church, during its vigor, was that the people should contribute their property, the nobility their blood, and the clergy their prayers to the necessities of the state." These words define very well the historical functions of each of the three orders.

The preponderance then was to belong to the clergy under superstitious chiefs; to the nobility, under warlike kings; to burgherism, under a spendthrift royalty.

Royalty had been superstitious during the barbarous period, and warlike during the feudal period. Louis the Fourteenth having drawn the nobles to court, could not keep them there without ruining himself in fêtes, festivals, parades and pensions; in this way he exhausted the public treasury and rendered the kingdom dependent on that one of the three orders whose historical function it was to pay.

The ruling characteristic of the reign of Louis the Fourteenth was, notwithstanding the battles which fill the seventeenth century, less a taste for war than for splendor. War itself was not then but a fête. Did not the king conduct it in a carriage with his mistresses? It is useless to recall the treasures which this reign devoured. "Sire," said the sage Colbert one day to the king, "your Majesty has so mixed up diversions with war, that it is very difficult to divide them. And if your Majesty would examine in detail how many useless expenses have been incurred, your Majesty would see that were these expenses all curtailed you would not be reduced to the necessity under which you now are." Louis the Fourteenth in fact, left a debt of two billions, four hundred and twelve mil-

lions, and as the third estate was alone charged with paying it, it became the master.

Behold, then, the revolution partially explained in advance, and Louis the Fourteenth should have been enabled to foresee it, when he who had counted so many princes and men of genius among his flatterers, found himself reduced to descend from the height of his pride to become the flatterer of a banker. Samuel Bernard was invited to visit Marly. The king and the financier met face to face, and of these two powers, it was the first which courted the other.

But the king might have still had recourse to violence in order to fill his coffers. Burgherism was in possession of the right of voting the subsidies. The institution of the States General was not dead; it only waited its hour of action. Then when the protector of the manufacturers wrote to Louis the Fourteenth, "an useless repast at the expense of a thousand crowns has given me incredible pain," he only opened a series of formidable controls. Colbert appearing in the midst of the festivals of Louis the Fourteenth with a severe and sombre countenance, resembled the phantom of burgherism come to write on the walls of the festive halls the decree of death to the nobility absorbed by the monarchy.

Louis the Fourteenth contributed none the less to undermine the power of the clergy without intending it and without knowing it.

France through protestanism, had become mechanical, manufacturing and commercial. Rejected from state employments, the protestants had taken labor as a means and wealth as an end; and so well had they done so, that before the revocation of the edict of Nantes, "rich as a protestant" was a bye-phrase. A quiet transformation of the former genius of France and of its social life had taken place through that means. From an agricultural, it had become a manufacturing country. The rule of warriors was effaced before that of merchants; and it was in the height of this movement, when it was too late to arrest or destroy it, that Louis the Fourteenth gave the signal for a persecution which is among the most atrocious and mad of those that have soiled history. Thousands of peaceful citizens trampled under the feet of horses or massacred, a quarter of the kingdom pillaged, the heritage of fathers promised to the apostacy of children, war against the firesides of families, a lamentable emigration of laborers carrying wealth with them and going to a foreign soil to build up new cities, the favor of a prince assured to informers, hypocrites, zealous bullies, apostles of murder, such were the effects of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. And what consequences. The holiness of the eternal repose of the Huguenots was outraged; that natal land in which they were refused permission to live, was refused to them to die in; dead bodies were judged and condemned for the crime of heresy; and there were examples in Paris of the dead interred during the night beneath the stones at the turnings of the streets; and the children of Duquesne fled with the bones of their father.

Could the moral authority of the clergy resist such horrors, when the odium of them was thrown on them? One may conceive that excesses of tyranny are tolerated in an agricultural country; man is there chained to the soil, and the earth does not travel. But industry travels; manu-

factures follow the manufacturer, and go, when tyranny shows itself, whither liberty calls them, leaving in the places they have once animated a taste for movement, the ardor of awakened wants, a misery become restless, and finally an indestructible desire to re-awaken to life through independence. This was what justly happened after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. By this terrible example, France new and dominant, the France of the manufacturers learned that it needed liberty of conscience for the development of wealth. Labor became hostile to religion. On one side were found the industrious classes, on the other the priests.

Louis the Fourteenth powerfully subverted the interests of burgherism, by absolving the nobility and drawing the clergy in his train into the paths of persecution and fanaticism; he served them still better by the rough mortal attacks he made, at its urgency, against the monarchical principle; for the true destroyer of absolute monarchy in France, in the world of ideas, is Louis the Fourteenth; an assertion so strange and apparently so paradoxical that some developments are necessary to justify it.

We left the Jansenists beneath the blow of the first severities of Louis the Fourteenth. Afterwards, the persecution having calmed down, their forces had so increased that the papacy did not disdain to treat with them; instead of the *pure and simple* signature, until that time exacted for the formulary, Clement the Ninth contented himself with the *sincere signature*, this inexhaustible source of equivocations and subtleties, was pompously styled the *peace of the church*. The Jansenists were indebted for it to the protection of Lyonne, the minister for foreign affairs, to the friendship of the Princess de Conti, and especially to that of the Duchess de Longueville, reduced to devotion by exhaustion in amours.

The peace once concluded, the party used it and profited by it as a victory. Saci, who had been sent to the bastille, left it at once and in triumph. Antoine Arnauld was enabled to show himself in Paris, where he became the object of a curiosity that enthusiasm ennobled. Desmarts appeared in the pulpit, and held the capital attentive. De Lyonne having died, Pomponne, the son of Arnauld d'Andilly, was called to the ministry of foreign affairs. Arnauld d'Andilly was himself presented at court, and received with such encouraging grace by Louis the Fourteenth, that he dared to say him, "Sire, I have a request to ask; it is that your majesty would deign to love me a little." To which Louis replied by embracing the gay and happy old man.* The literary reputation of Port Royal took, moreover, a prodigious flight about this time, thanks to the first volume of the *Essais de Morale*, by Nicole, and to the book *de la Perpetuité de la Foi*, in which Nicole joined Arnauld to bear down the protestants. It was the fashion to talk of nothing but the knowledge of the Port Royalists, of their virtues, their eloquence, "and of that masculine, vigorous, animated spirit which was characteristic of their books and their conversations."† Madame de Sévigné admired them, and did not conceal it. Boileau, without becoming a convert to their doctrines,

* Petitot, Notice sur Port Royal, p. 206.

† Voltaire, Siècle de Louis quatorze, chap. 37.

lavished on their talent testimonies of an esteem of which he knew them to be desirous. Racine, their pupil, separated from them for a time, by the anathema with which Nicole had struck the theatre; the illustrious Racine was not long in yielding to the impulses of his heart, and hastened to throw himself at the feet of Antoine Arnauld, doing homage to his glory. A single cloud passed over so much splendor. The nuns of Port Royal, in Paris, had submitted to an anti-Jansenistic direction, and separated, by a decree of the council, from their sisters of Port Royal des Champs,* who afterwards declared themselves their enemies.

Such was then the situation of the party, when unexpected complications came to push it on to the part reserved for it in the prologue of the French Revolution. Louis the Fourteenth was surrounded at this period by a renown which was only equalled by his pride. He had rendered himself imposing abroad by his wars in Flanders and the high tone of his diplomacy. At home he had impressed a character so august on royalty, that his court, composed of men of genius and of heroes, resembled that of a demi-god. Europe was covered with confusion, it trembled. Threatened by the yoke of this monarch, and tired of his haughtiness, it was not satisfied with raising against him the leagued armies that enveloped him; it sought for and excited dark enemies against him within his own kingdom. It had recourse to the turbulent fanaticism of theologians to shake a throne, in the shade of which every thing seemed to disappear; and whilst the empire, Spain and the Elector of Brandenburg were uniting their resentments and their soldiers against Louis the Fourteenth, German Austria and Spanish Austria were circumventing and studying to embitter the pope against the eldest son of the church. Arbitrary confiscations encroach upon ecclesiastical property; the benefices of the church are laden with military pensions; a threatening surveillance oppresses the carriers of the Roman rents, and finally two declarations of the council, one in 1673, the other in 1675, extend to provinces which had heretofore been free from it, the exercise of the *régale*. Now the *régale*, as is known, gave the king the right to enjoy the revenues of a bishoprick during its vacancy, and to confer the benefices which were dependent on it. It was to declare open war against the holy see.

If the Jansenists had not been fearful of losing in repose their importance, which was acquired in troubles, would they have taken part on this occasion with the court of Rome, which had pursued them so rigorously with its exactions? And would we have seen them awakening the sleeping wrath of Louis the Fourteenth, by running counter to his hatred? Certain it is, that from them came the opposition to the right of *régale*. It was two Jansenist prelates, the bishops of Alet and Pamiers, who first figured in the revolt, animated and encouraged by the pope, whose assistance they had solicited, and well determined to push things to the uttermost. The old Pavillon, Bishop of Alet, so resisted the most absolute monarch in the world, as to tire out persecution. He was reduced to live by alms,† but they could not conquer him, and he died erect, if we may so speak, in his resistance, leaving to his colleague of Pamiers the

* *Memoires de Fontaine*, t. 1. p. 59.

† *Ranke, Hist. de la Papauté*, t. 4. p. 456.

inheritance of his pious madness. During this time, Clement the Tenth himself died also, and an adversary worthy of Louis the Fourteenth mounted the throne of St. Peter. It was Osdelcachi of Como. He had come to Rome at the age of twenty-five, with his sword by his side and his pistol in his belt;* he loved Austria; he hated the King of France, and in the humility of the priest he preserved the old vigor of the soldier. His advent but inflamed the strife.

Then commenced a period of misery and terror for the Jansenists. Death taking from them the Duchess of Longueville, and Pomponne being in disgrace, they found themselves without any defence, in the hands of an irritated prince. Their fate became lamentable. Saci and the author of the *Memoires*, Fontaine, concealed themselves in the country-seat of the disgraced minister. The solitaires of the valley of Chevreuse were dispersed, and the nuns were deprived of their confessors. Antoine Arnauld, Sainte Marthe, Tillemont, Nicole, fled to the Low Countries, where they suffered all the evils of exile, at an expense to some, decried by others, forced constantly to change their residence, and sometimes sleeping upon straw.† It was at the close of these cruel trials that the indomitable Arnauld said to Nicole, "You wish to repose! Have you not all eternity in which to do so?"‡ Singular sports of history; the most fruitful source of the success of the Jansenists sprang from their apparent ruin.

The affair of the *régule* gave Parliament a hint. Desirous of extending its jurisdiction at the expense of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and of wresting the tutelage of royalty from the church, it encouraged the resentments of the prince, and evinced a systematic ardor in embittering the quarrel. By what right dared the pope to lay his hand upon the crown of France? Were the destinies of the kingdom to be left to the mercies of a foreign power? It was time to break up this foreign dictatorship, to cease to pay the disgraceful tribute of Annates to Rome; French bishops should no longer be insulted by being called bishops by virtue of a permission sent from Rome.§ Such language charmed Louis the Fourteenth; moreover, why should he hesitate? He was so entirely master of his clergy, that the Prince of Condé said, "that if the king took a fancy to embrace protestantism, the clergy would be the first to imitate him." A general assembly of the clergy was then held in Paris, and it received orders to pronounce on the pretensions of the papacy. Bossuet, surprised, and with his soul a prey to a vague disquietude, was desirous at first of acting as mediator between the king and pope. But if Bossuet was a priest, he was also a courtier, and Louis the Fourteenth said he was to be obeyed without reserve. The declaration of 1682 appeared, composed of four articles, drawn up by Bossuet himself.

"The pope has no authority over the temporal power of kings."

"A general council is above the pope."

"The liberties of the Gallican church are inviolable."

* Ranke, *Hist. de la Papauté*, p. 454.

† Letter of Nicole, cited by Petitot, p. 228.

‡ Ibid. p. 227.

§ See the Latin text: in the complete works of Bossuet, t. 9. p. 9.

"The decisions of the pope in matters of faith are not irreformable until after the church has accepted them."

The political importance of such an act was immense. By elevating kings above all ecclesiastical jurisdiction, by taking from the people the guarantee which the right granted to the sovereign pontiff, of watching over the temporal masters of the earth, of restraining and suspending them, and by freeing their subjects from the oath of allegiance, promised them, the declaration of 1682 appeared to place kings in a region inaccessible to storms. Louis the Fourteenth was deceived by it. He thought he had given an eternal basis to absolute monarchy by freeing it from the most respected of all controls. But in that his error was profound and pitiful. Absolute power, in the true sense of the word, is chimerical, impossible. There never has been, and, thanks to Heaven, there never will be, an irresponsible despotism. How violently soever tyranny may carry itself, the right of control exists always against it, here under one form, there under another, but everywhere real, everywhere imperishable, and sooner or later acting. In the alarm with which the strength of that tyrant, who has more executioners than slaves, inspires you, you are careful beforehand to deny his fall; if it is not a bill which stops him, an insurrection threatens him, and if a popular revolt is powerless to put him to death, perchance a concealed dagger finds his heart. The declaration of 1682, changed in no respect the right of control. It did but displace it by taking it from the pope, and it displaced it to transport it first to the parliament, and thence to the multitude.

It is very certain that the popes had not often used, for the benefit of the people, the high patronage which the genius of Gregory the Seventh immortalized, and in this aspect there is much to reply to the arguments used against Gallicanism by two illustrious writers of our own day, Messieurs de Lammenais and Joseph de Maistre. But the folly of Louis the Fourteenth and his ministers consisted in not having perceived that the competency of the popes in matters of sovereignty protected the kings, instead of being hostile to them, since it offered a guarantee to the people which was almost always illusory and which could secure them without rendering them subservient. The issue proved it well. The time came in France, when the nation perceived that the independence of kings was the servitude of the people. The nation then rose, indignant at its sufferings, demanding justice. But the judges of royalty being wanting, the nation judged it itself, and excommunication was replaced by a decree of death.

The second article of the declaration was not less revolutionary than the first; for to affirm the superiority of councils over popes, was to lead to that of assemblies over kings. What motive was there why a temporal monarchy should be more absolute than a spiritual one? Was a crown then more sacred than a tiara? See to what a formidable approximation the declaration of 1682 precipitated the minds of men. The example of the English was there also. They had seen Pym and Cromwell, the leaders of the assemblies, strike blows, whose resound still lasted, and when Louis the Fourteenth imprudently hazarded that tumult-

tuous principle of multiplied sovereignties, forty years had not elapsed, since England, by its commons, had put to death its king.

And yet Louis the Fourteenth established with great satisfaction this doctrine in which regicide germinated; nay though it was increasing in some degree in the rising generation, he made it an object of public and forced instruction. There was not so much need of it, for the days of burgherism were approaching. The four articles were then saluted with long acclaim. Arnauld, whom Rome solicited to attack them with the offer of a cardinal's hat, entered the lists only to defend them.* The parliamentarians rejoiced in hope. One transport united the disciples of Calvin and Jansenius, all unclassified parties, all grumbling opinions. Should not such manifestations have warned Louis the Fourteenth of the mistake he had made? But no; they irritated his pride, without speaking to his intelligence. It displeased him, that parties abhorred by him, should triumph in a declaration which was the work of his sovereign will and from which he had hoped all the benefit and all the joy, for himself alone. Applauses which he did not command, offended him as an usurpation of his rights; and it was then in order to show the Calvinists that the vigor of his arm was not lost in striking Rome, that he displayed it by that frightful revocation of the Edict of Nantes, of whose effects we have already spoken.

Thus, after having in the declaration of 1682 furnished the adversaries of the principle of authority with a terrible arm, he pushed them on by persecution to agitate and use it. It was his entrance on a career of folly which he pursued to the end. The violences which his wrath preserved against the Jansenists were however suspended so long as father La Chaise was his confessor. But when abased beneath the double yoke of the fierce Tellier and Madame de Maintenon, he had against him the combined artifices of a bad priest and a heartless woman, every thing precipitated him on. They easily persuaded this prodigious egotist that it was the part of his subjects to pay for the ransom of his soul. Thousands of men had perished for his glory on the field of battle when he was young and warlike; in his devout old age, it appeared quite natural for him to proscribe a quarter of his kingdom for his safety. The destruction of Port Royal was resolved upon.

The details of it which have been preserved for us in the chapter placed at the beginning of the *Memoires* of Fontaine are odious. A band of insolent archers is let loose upon a house inhabited by girls of a sombre, but sincere piety. They assemble them, interdicted and alarmed, and thus count them like a vile flock, and drive them away in the midst of licentious jests and the noise of their mocking laughter.† Then, to crown the scandal, and to deprive popular credulity of all pretext for pious pilgrimages, comes the decree of the 22d of January, 1710, by virtue of which the walls of the cloister are demolished, the sepulchres opened and the bones scattered.‡

* Racine, *Hist. de Port Royal*, p. 175.

† *Memoires de Fontaine*, t. 1. p. 93. et suiv.

‡ *Memoires de Saint Simon*, t. 13. chap. 10. p. 154, Edit. Santelet, 1829.

This was but little ; the confessor and favorite needed a kind of touchstone by means of which they could discover secret enemies and destroy them with the king. From thence arose the idea of asking for an ecclesiastical code of proscription from the pope, under the color of a bull.

Who does not feel a profound sentiment of surprise and of pity mixed with horror, that after the troubles excited by the *Augustinus* a work of the same kind should have been permitted to distract the attention of men from the most famous pursuits, and that there should have sprung from this work, as from a pestilential source, numberless evils, unheard of persecutions, imprisonment for some, exile for others, the rising of the magistracy throughout all the kingdom, seditions, scenes of tragic buffoonery at the foot of altars or in the midst of tombs, and, and finally, a frightful, unchained hatred, scandals and follies? Such was, however, the destiny of the book of Quesnel, styled *Moral Reflections on the New Testament*.

This book, which was a commentary on the gospel, exhaled sacred perfumes from every page. It was dear to pious souls, and was for a long time beyond the reach of all censure. Attacked in 1703 by an anonymous author, it had the distinguished fortune to be defended by a bishop named Bossuet,* and the Cardinal de Noailles, Archbishop of Paris, had constantly bestowed his brilliant protection upon it. It is true that in 1708, a brief of the pope condemned it, as "partaking of the Jansenist heresy," but the brief not having been received in France, no attention was paid to it, when Tellier conceived the plan of reviving the act of censure under a solemn form. To humble the Cardinal de Noailles, his enemy ; to avenge the Jesuits for the quiet hatred and austere contempt of that prelate ; to bring Jansenism to bay, and in the trivial but energetic words of Saint Simon to have "a blacking pot with which to daub whom he wished, so that no one could be in doubt,"† was what he had determined upon.

Who would have believed, that in this black work, he should have as an auxiliary by the side of Bissy who was striving for the Roman purple, the mild and tolerant Archbishop of Cambray? Yes, Fenelon himself did not fear to become the agent of a system of persecution,‡ either from having incurred in his book of the *Maxims of the Saints*, the blame of the Holy See, he yielded to the secret, but guilty desire of effacing by the misfortune of another the trace of his own, or because there was in his declaration of war against Jansenism but the revolt of a tender soul against rigor without elevation and inhuman doctrines.

Things were then going on according to the desire of the confessor. Louis the Fourteenth thought himself saved ; if he should obtain that Rome should load with its anger, theses which he did not understand, in a book which he had not read ; and on the 12th of December, 1711, the Cardinal de la Trimoille received an order to ask from the pope a

* Hist. du livre des reflexions morales sur le nouveau Testament et de la Constitution Unigenitus, t. 1. p. 97, Amsterdam, 1723.

† Memoires de Saint Simon, t. 3. chap. 10. p. 157.

‡ Hist. de la Constitution Unigenitus, t. 1. p. 101. Journal de l'Abbé Dorsanne, t. 1. p. 5, 1756.

constitution pointing out all the heretical propositions contained in the book of Quesnel.

"Be careful, be careful," exclaimed some prudent old men to the holy father, "what they ask from you is a torch, which may set fire to a kingdom." But Tellier sent couriers after couriers to the French ambassador; the Cardinal Fabroni spared nothing to inflame the zeal of the censors of the holy office; the Jesuit Daubenton pressed on the affair in the name of his imperious company; Louis the Fourteenth insisted and promised the submission of France; and a memorial against Jansenism, written by the Dauphin* and taken from his casket, was distributed around the Vatican; the bull *Unigenitus* appeared. It was signed by Clement the Eleventh, on the 8th of September, 1713, after a laborious examination of eighteen months, and it carried with it into France half a century of disorders.

The noise which it made in our country would be inconceivable, if all the propositions condemned in it had been of this kind. "There are no charms which do not yield to those of grace, because nothing resists the all-powerful. It is in vain that we cry out to God, my Father, my Father, if it is not the spirit of charity which cries out. Sunday should be sanctified by reading works of piety," etc., etc. But Quesnel had said in his book, "The fear of an unjust excommunication should not prevent us from doing our duty." To condemn this proposition as the bull *Unigenitus* did, was to proclaim anew the right of popes to rule the consciences of kings, to govern kingdoms by the terror of divine anathemas; it was to overthrow, from top to bottom, the doctrine which the declaration of 1682, had consecrated. This was the serious side of the bull, and Louis the Fourteenth could not accept it, without giving a scandalous lie to himself. But surrounded then by theological disputes, weakened by age, haunted by lugubrious images, he sacrificed every thing to the honor of that eternal night, on which he was on the eve of entering.

The bull crossed the mountains. The agitation commenced at once. The parliament is alarmed, and seeks a vent for the discontent which it enchains, and hoping to embitter the Cardinal de Noailles by a feeling of defeat, the Jansenists press around him with ardor, and Quesnel, until then humble and submissive, replies to the applauses of his friends, "The bull strikes an hundred and one truths at a single blow. To accept it would be to realize the prophecy of Daniel when he said that a part of the strong had fallen like the stars of heaven."† During this time the prelates who were in Paris, met, deliberated, joined in or separated during the tumult of the most heated debates. Forty pronounced for the constitution and for a pastoral letter, which was to spread abroad its spirit; nine, among whom was M. de Noailles, asked for explanations. Louis the Fourteenth, irritated, prohibited the cardinal from coming to Versailles and into his presence; the other eight opposing prelates received orders to return to their dioceses in three days, and,

* Journal de l'Abbé Dorsanne, t. 1. p. 3.

† Picot, Memoires Eccles., t. 1. p. 90.

determined to force the acceptance of the bull by letters patent registered by the parliament, he summons his council.

He had accustomed the parliament to obey him in silence, yet language was addressed to him on this occasion, beneath which future revolts appeared to grow lowly. Was the monarch, it said by his letters patent, to become a judge between his bishops, and to decide on questions of faith? Never had an assembly like that which had been held on the constitution, been thus affirmed. Besides, the constitutions of Rome were not binding on France, and the bull *Unigenitus* emitted, on the subject of excommunication, principles too contrary to the maxims of the kingdom to be accepted without reserve. Such were the representations of the Attorney General d'Augessean and Joly de Fleury to the lofty monarch,* and they asked that at least the word *enjoin* should be replaced in the letters patent by that of *exhort*.† Louis the Fourteenth was at first disposed to agree to this change, but he soon reconsidered it, and on the 15th of February, 1714, letters patent, drawn up in the style of absolute power, were carried to the parliament. The grand chamber and tournelle were convened as usual, but several presidents and counsellors were absent,‡ “or leaned against the wall near the door as mere spectators.”§ Others, more courageous, determined to risk the dangers of resistance. In the speech in which the advocate general, Joly de Fleury, required their registry, he pointed out to what abuses the propositions on the right of excommunication might open a career, and he made an express reservation of the laws and maxims of the kingdom.|| The words *we enjoin* were then criticised with firmness, mingled with prudence, by the Abbé Pucelle and several other counsellors. But as one of them was speaking, the president, to cut short a dangerous discussion, turned to the register and said to him, “Write the name of Monsieur.”¶ Nothing more was wanting to produce silence in an assembly, which the shadow only of Louis the Fourteenth frightened. The letters patent and the decree of registry were not however published in the ordinary form. Colporteurs were prohibited from crying them through the streets, they were to content themselves with presenting them in the streets to any one who wished to buy them.**

Thus was introduced into France, the famous bull *Unigenitus*, by which the doctrine of the four articles was overthrown. But it was too late. The principle of the sovereignty of the assemblies prevailed already in the minds of men. The Protestants adopted it from hate to Rome; the Jansenists from opposition to the court which persecuted them; the philosophers, because they desired innovation; all the discontented, because they wished to overthrow the existing order of things. Thus it only furnished a field of battle for the combats of thought for fifty years. Royalty received mortal wounds at his hands. Louis the Fourteenth had, in 1682, laid down the premises of the syllogism, whose

* Journal de l'Abbé Dorsanne, t. 1. p. 102, et 103.

† Ibid.

‡ Histoire de la Constitution *Unigenitus*, t. 2. p. 2.

§ Journal de l'Abbé Dorsanne, t. 1. p. 107.

|| Picot, *Memoires Eccles.*, t. 1. p. 95.

¶ Journal de l'Abbé Dorsanne, t. 1. p. 108.

conclusions the members of the convention afterwards drew in striking down Louis the Sixteenth.

Such are the grave instructions to be drawn from the life of the great king; those which his death affords are not of less importance; it is proper we should recall this death, for the lasting satisfaction of an avenged people.

Louis the Fourteenth, when young, had astonished, dazzled mankind. His good fortune appeared to have surpassed human limits. Europe, which his wars agitated and which his splendor humbled, could not avoid admiring and submitting. France contemplated him on its knees. Followed by a train of great men, he had traversed his age, filling it with his presence.

Now old, languishing, alone amid the phantoms of the past, and when death, striking down all his family, reduced him to fear a poisoner in his nephew, he represented only the exhaustion and decay of monarchical France. That he might not cease to think himself a potentate, he had abandoned Port Royal to destruction, consciences to violation; it was to furnish a new aliment to his despotism, to reinvigorate his part. But it did not answer. The most absolute monarch who ever lived succumbed under a feeling of his impotence. "When I was king," he said bitterly, and he searched for himself in his empty palace.

Let us recall that pretended ambassador from Persia, received in solemn audience at Versailles.* Louis the Fourteenth appeared that day before his court pale already from his approaching death, but covered with precious stones and smiling. It is said that his past age revived before his eyes, and that he still listened to its noise in his memory. And yet it was only a lying parade got up by some courtiers to deceive the melancholy of their old master and to strengthen his discouraged pride.

These were to be the last joys of Louis the Fourteenth. Six months after he was stretched upon the bed of death, and a sight was then exhibited as instructive as terrible. There was not a friendly face, no one to administer the last consolations about a king who thought himself adored. Tellier was at his intrigues, and the Cardinal de Rohan at his pleasures. Madame de Maintenon, tired of the company of a dying man, from whom she had nothing more to expect, was on her way to the convent.† An hundred paces from his father, who had loved him too well, and who was in the agonies of death, the Duke of Maine was making his intimates laugh at a pleasant story he was telling.‡ The courtiers were flocking off to the Duke of Orleans.

Thus died Louis the Fourteenth, seeking in vain around him for a friendly glance, striking his breast, reciting the *Confiteor*, and having none to weep for him but a few valets, who were paid to do so.

His heart was carried to the church of Saint Antoine by six Jesuits, huddled together in a carriage,§ and his body to Saint Denis. The mul-

* *Memoires de Duclos*, t. 10, de la Collection Michaud et Poujoulat, p. 477.

† *Memoires de Saint Simon*, t. 12, p. 492.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ *Lamontey, Hist. de la Regence*, t. 1, p. 40.

titude had had no diversion for a long time; the funeral of the king reanimated them. They gaily covered the plain. All kinds of food and refreshments were carried thither.* They drank, they sang, the throne was insulted even in a coffin. A revolution was evidently approaching.

CHAPTER VII.

PROGRESS OF BURGERISM.

THE REGENCY—THE SYSTEM OF LAW.

Parallel destinies of the House of Orleans and Burgerism—Philip of Orleans obtains the Regency; what it did for Burgerism—Arrival of Law at the Court of the Regent—Law meditates not only a financial revolution, but the greatest and most profound social revolution that has ever been attempted—The conception of Law; grandeur and beauty of this conception—In what the true error of Law consisted—Establishment of the system; its successive developments—Causes which perverted it—Financial Saturnalia—The Nobility and Stock-jobbing—The system aids the triumph of Burgerism—External policy of the Regent in contradiction with his internal policy—The English use Dubois to destroy Law; their end in this—Fall of the system—Law calumniated—Abasement and enfeeblement of every thing which did not belong to Burgerism—Sufferings of the People.

SUCH was burgerism at the beginning of the eighteenth century. It remains for us to sift the principal historical circumstances which favored it, the ideas that saved it, and what finally rendered its triumph complete, and the Revolution inevitable.

And first, burgerism, in order to seize on political power, needed a leader; it found one in the house of Orleans.

It has happened that the house of Orleans and burgerism have aggrandized in parallel lines in our history, supporting each other, and strong in this mutual assistance.

During the reign of Louis the Fourteenth, we may remark indications of a quiet and veiled strife between the two branches of the royal family, but still real, continued, envenomed, by jealousy and confused disquiet. Towards the close of it, the opposition shone out in every thing.

Here, in the silence of Versailles, was the court of the great king, which we have shown to be so devout and so sombre: there, in the tumult of Paris, was the luxurious and impious court of a prince, ardent in the pursuit of pleasure, of lords almost always drunk, of duchesses confounded by a habit of shameless pleasures with the dregs of courtezans; there were besides much splendor, tolerance and wit, and to do the honors of this disorder at once brilliant and obscene, was the Abbé Dubois, cunning with the look of a fox, a stammerer to hide

* *Memoires du Duclos*, t. 10, de la Collection Michaud, p. 498.

his falseness, and become the necessary friend of the regent, his pupil, from having brought him up in debauchery and blasphemy.

No contrast could be more striking; but what rendered it serious and profound was, that it answered to a division which went through society from the top to the bottom. The elder branch sustained itself on the Jesuits, the Sulpicians, the military power and the nobles; the younger afforded a rallying sign and a standard to Jansenists, oratorians, protestants, philosophers, the civil authority, the industrious classes.

The alliance was thus prepared between the house of Orleans and burgherism a long time since; it was sealed on the 2d of September, 1715.

Knowing that the will of his father had been found in the house of an obscure merchant, Louis the Fourteenth had placed his under a triple lock, in an iron press in the big tower of the parliament. Vain precaution! This will, which took from the Duke of Orleans the reality of power and enchained his regency, was carried before an assembly of magistrates, and torn up there without ado. The duke, who did not believe in so easy a victory, had inundated the approaches to parliament and the vestibules with adventurers, having arms concealed beneath their garments; the shameful docility of the magistrates spared him the scandal of violence. Did not the members of the parliament make themselves voluntary accomplices in thus upsetting the rules of the monarchy? They gained by it a restitution of the right of remonstrances, and the faculty of disposing of the sovereign power.

It is thus that the house of Orleans and burgherism mounted together upon the political scene; and from the very first day they divided the spoils of the old monarchy between them; a decisive division, full of dangers, which placed thrones and popular assemblies face to face, opposed to the mute force of the men of the sword, the stormy empire of eloquence, and transformed an absolute into a mixed monarchy.

This did not, however, prevent the parliament from humbling itself excessively before the monarchical principle in a bed of justice held ten days afterwards. The presidents and counsellors having bent the knee to the earth, the first president said to the king, "All are impressed with the desire of contemplating you as the visible image of God on earth, and of seeing you exercise on it the first and most brilliant function of royalty, and of receiving the homages, the commissions and the solemn oath of inviolable fidelity from your kingdom."*

The king, being a child of five years old, a gentleman held him in his arms. Having taken off and laid aside his hat, he said, "Sirs, I have come here to prove my affection to you; the chancellor will tell you my will." His will was, that during his minority the Duke of Orleans should govern as the members of parliament had decided. It could not have been otherwise, and in the train of the Duke of Orleans, the Revolution entered into public affairs.

It becomes necessary here to consider, even without reference to the necessities of the situation, with what qualities, good or bad, the new regent was endowed.

* Recueil general des Anciennes Loix Françaises. Collect. Isan-bat.

Playful, of an easy humor, a mixture of softness and intrepidity, charming by his grace and ease, plunged in vice, the reign of devotees and their sombre discipline horrified him. He would not consent to continue the system of persecution and fanaticism in force under his uncle, having no intolerance but what springs from courage, and despising men too much to hate them. Prompt to deny every thing as to comprehend every thing, the authority of rule irritated his mocking independence. It would besides have cramped his pleasures. How could he have respected traditions? It was enough for him to subjugate beliefs which were modern; for he was passionately devoted to the Unknown, at the same time that he was skeptical. Had not he, the declared enemy of vulgar practices, of mean superstitions, been seen to plunge rashly into dark researches, from out of which he came with the reputation of a poisoner, which he did not deserve? Religion made him laugh; alchemy seduced and charmed him. He did not believe in God, and he believed in magic. It is seen how such a prince was fit to break with the past, to try the future. Moreover, he joined what is strange, a character irresolute and weak to excess, with extreme audacity of thought, which made him depend upon the boldness of his subalterns, always more adventurous than that of the master. Thus the regency merits a large place in the history of the development of burgherism, and in the recital of the causes which led to the Revolution.

We have said what importance the tradition of the States General had always preserved in the minds of men, it appeared very clearly under the regency, by the proceedings of the legitimate princes.

Could Louis the Fourteenth give his bastards the right of succeeding to the crown after the princes of the blood? The latter denied it strongly, and in the request which they presented on this subject, they allowed strange, formidable avowals to escape them. To admit eventually the Duke of Maine and the Count of Toulouse to the crown, was, according to the princes of the blood, to deprive the nation of its dearest right, which is, when the royal family is extinct, to dispose of itself.*

See what the legitimate princes said:† “the legitimate princes are by their nature of the blood royal; they are then included in the contract made by the nation with the reigning house. In giving the crown to a certain family, the people have in view the preservation of their repose, and propose to avoid the inconveniences of elections. Every thing which retards the extinction of the reigning family is then thought to be in conformity with the desires of the nation, agreeable with its interests.” And still further, “this matter can only be decided by a king in his majority or at the request of the *three estates*.”

The king, on his side, by the edict in which he revoked that of his grandfather expressed himself in these terms‡ “if the French nation experienced this misfortune (the extinction of the royal family) it would be for the nation to repair it by the wisdom of its choice; and since the fundamental laws of our kingdom place us in a happy impotence to

* Requete des princes du sang.

† Memoire des princes légitimes.

‡ Edict of July 1st, 1717.

alienate the domains of the crown, we should glory in the knowledge that we are still less free to dispose of our crown itself."

A protest which thirty-nine members of the high nobility had signed, at last appeared, and it stated that such a proceeding concerned the nation and could only be judged by the assembly of the states.

Thus did the famous maxim, "the king holds his crown but from God," crumble away beneath a common effort. How destitute of foresight is the egotism of human passions! It was not the populace, nor burghers, but princes of the blood, peers of France, gentlemen, the king himself who here invoked a principle essentially destructive of privileges and of royalty. It was they who were earnestly digging the ditch which was to swallow them up.

The sovereignty of the States General, so loudly proclaimed, promised a victory to burgherism, which the numerous changes introduced into the state by the regency precipitated.

Burgherism desired that the products of the nation should be encouraged; that the regime of distinctions should lose all it had that was humiliating to inferiors; that a rein should be placed on the rule of the Jesuits; that the liberty of person and of conscience should be placed beyond the reach of assault; in a word, that industrial pursuits might be enabled to develop themselves at their ease, without having to face the furies of fanaticism and the blows of a dark tyranny.

The regent subserved those interests and these instincts less from calculation and policy, than from yielding to his nature and circumstances. The commencements of his administration were such, that to characterize them, they inundated Paris with prints, representing sacks of crowns.* He had scarcely assumed the control of affairs, when he prohibited the tissues of India and ordered the merchandize which was seized to be burned by the executioner.† Etiquette appeared to be less cramped under him. He ordered a revision of the letters de cachet. Tolerant, from the softness of his manners and his skepticism, he pleased himself with an almost gorgeous impiety, and selected fete days for his brilliant debauches; but, at the same time, he dismissed Tellier, drew the Jansenists‡ out of prison, assigned places for the exercise of their worship to the Calvinists and foreign soldiers in the service of France, and gave cemeteries to the subjects of protestant powers who died in the kingdom.§

Thus at home, the regent seconded efficaciously the progress of burgherism, but abroad, on the contrary, he allowed himself to be drawn on by his egotism to combat it.

So long as public power in our country was derived from those two sources of the Roman power, agriculture and war, the nation had been enabled, without inconvenience, to remain confined within the girdle of its mountains and its ports. But France had become manufacturing, through the progress of burgherism. Now the sea is necessary to a

* Œuvres de Lemontey, t. 6. p. 42. Edit. Pautin. Paris, 1832.

† Ibid. p. 56.

‡ Hist. de la Constitution Unigenitus, t. 3. p. 370-371.

§ Œuvres de Lemontey, t. 7. p. 160.

manufacturing people. The care of its private interests commands it, still more does that of its common greatness; for the ardor of gain, when nothing elevates it, destroys empires; it accustoms men to small thoughts, it acts upon and fills the heart without enlarging it, it abases character, it effaces the idea of a country. When a desire for wealth becomes the ruling motive power of a society, it is necessary to ennoble it by associating it with the splendor of vast designs, by making it concurrent with the fortune of the state itself; and to prevent its becoming a cause of a general abasement, it is not too much to give it, as the English have, the ocean to subjugate and the world to conquer.

Manufacturing has moreover this about it which is dangerous in imperfect societies; by agglomerating a restless population in the cities, it introduces the spirit of faction into them, arms the poor against the rich from envy, and prepares the way for troubles which become terrible, if the popular passions, wanting issues, cannot dissipate themselves and become extinguished either in the excitement of wars or the unforeseen events of voyages.

What the increasing importance of burgherism required was, colonies, vessels, life abroad, the sea; and it was these, which, from an interest entirely personal, the regent was about to sacrifice to the policy of the English and their false friendship.

Burgherism thus oscillated between two opposite movements under the regency; the one internal, which was favorable to it, the other external, which was fatal to it. This double and contradictory policy must arrest us, that we may seek for its causes and mark its results, for it characterizes the historical part of the Orleans family in this country.

The first of the two movements of which we are about to speak, was represented more particularly by Law, the second by Dubois.

A young Scotchman appeared one day in the midst of this court of France, heretofore so military, who came to vaunt the prodigies of banking to the sons of ruined soldiers. He was handsome, eloquent, bold and rich. He had visited, as a student and a gambler, the principal cities of commercial Europe, London, Amsterdam, Genoa, Venice, astonishing them by turns by his splendor, his good fortune, and his plans. He had every where shown himself to be prodigal of his fortune, but he only surrendered a portion of his thoughts; for it was against the tyranny of money and the privilege of idleness, that he was conspiring in his secret heart. He was not at first understood. The regent and his *roués* thought that he came to pay the debts of Louis the Fourteenth, and to furnish means for the costly pleasures of courtiers. When they afterwards began to divine his end, he fell.

The conception of Law was to render the state the depository of all fortunes and a sleeping partner in all labors; to make of France a merchant, as it had been made a soldier by its warlike monarchs, and to urge it to the conquest of virgin lands beyond the seas.

This conception, whose grandeur does not appear to us to have ever yet been shown, was handsome, new and bold. If it were to have the effect, considered by itself, of awakening the mercantile spirit, it was at least by ennobling it, by elevating it to the height of an interest in the

state, by giving it the world for a theatre and heroical proportions. It led besides to a more vast and vigorous democratic establishment than had ever existed. It was, unfortunately, as will appear in the close of this recital, exaggerated at home by a greedy court, and combatted in its development without, by a policy subservient to the influence of the English. We shall not then be astonished at seeing the system, corrupted and perverted, introduce into France an ardor for small affairs, a thirst for gambling, the bad side of the morals of industry, instead of brilliant and manly passions. And yet that very thing aided the moral ruin of the nobility and urged on the advent of burgher rule. We shall therefore not hesitate to go deeply into this subject; none of the great facts of the eighteenth century having been less studied and less cleared up than this; and none having had a more direct influence on the French Revolution.*

"There is not," said Law, "a surer mark of a state tending to ruin, than the dearness of money. It would be desirable that one should lend for nothing, or with the sole view of dividing with the borrower the profit which he shall derive from it. The natural idea of usury includes every thing lent, which, under the appearance of a benefit, places the benefactor more at his ease, and leads the borrower, whom he would solace, to his destruction."†

Thus what struck Law, what revolted his generous soul, was the tyranny exercised by certain possessors of dead wealth over the people, who are the living wealth.

Law did not confound, as has been maintained, money and capital. He was not ignorant that crowns or bank notes cannot take the place of bread for food, or of garments for a covering, or of a house for a dwelling. "Power and riches," he has written, "consist in the extent of population, and in stores of national or foreign merchandize."‡ Yes, Law knew very well that the first and direct sources of wealth are the progress of cultivation, the employment of the activity of all, the discoveries of science, the wisdom of institutions and laws; had he not seen idle Spain fall into indigence, with its hands full of the gold of Peru? But Law knew also that the use of riches depends on commerce and commerce on money;§ that for example, one might have in the north a sack of corn which might spoil for want of a consumer, and that there might be in the south a laborer who might perish for want of employment, if, thanks to the successive exchanges facilitated by money, the sack of corn did not reach the laborer and render his activity fruitful by nourishing him.

Money provoking in an indirect manner labor, which would never

* M. Thiers has written a notice of Law inserted in the *Dictionnaire de la Conversation*. This work, otherwise so brilliant, presents serious gaps. M. Thiers is deceived as to the nature of the economical doctrines of Law; he has not shown either the social bearing or the political side of the system; he has not given the true causes of his fall. But the purely financial part of the system is explained in the notice in question, except some material errors, with a rare sagacity, much elegance, and that admirable clearness which characterizes and distinguishes the talent of M. Thiers.

† *Première lettre sur le nouveau système des Finances*; *Mercur de France*, February, 1720.

‡ *Œuvres de Law, considérations sur le numéraire*, p. 145, Paris 1790. § *Ibid.*

be accomplished without it, Law concluded from this, that it might be augmented in a just measure, that is, until there should no longer remain in the kingdom a single stagnant product, or an unoccupied arm. From this, arose the importance which he attached to *quantity* in money matters; from this, those words which fall constantly from his pen, "the quantity of money should always be equal to the demand."*

It was in vain objected to him that the prosperity of a people depends upon the amount of its capital, and not its circulating medium, in the abundance of the thing represented and not in that of the metal or paper which represents it; that all the crowns and all the bank notes in the world will not produce an ear of corn upon a sterile rock or in a sandy plain; that by doubting the kinds, we only render the objects to be acquired twice as dear; that there was consequently no object in increasing the amount of money, since what was gained by quantity was lost by deterioration. Such arguments, specious as they were, were not sufficient for Law, whose mind was not less penetrating than daring.

It would matter little, doubtless, whether money was abundant or scarce, if it only served to represent sustenance, stuffs, wood in construction, stones in the course of building, in fine, national capital. But money serves to spread this capital by circulation, as the blood makes life to flow through our veins. Would a ship left to rot on the stocks be wealth? If you wish it to make a part of the national capital, you must finish it and launch it into the sea. But a series of exchanges is necessary for that, and what is their instrument? Money. It has then at least an indirect influence on wealth, and it is in this sense that Law has said, "An increase of the circulating medium adds to the wealth of a country." Thus he considered money not only as a sign and measure of value, but also as an instrument of exchanges; a profound distinction, and which concerns the safety of empires, closer than is believed.

What would happen in a country which did not use bank notes, and whose circulating medium was reduced to a single crown? This crown would equal the whole of those it had replaced in conventional value; but were it of the value of a billion, the exchanges would be none the less impossible. It must then be divided as much as can be, and nothing shows better that in the theory of money, we should pay regard to the question of *quantity*, as the modern economists and M. de Sismondi himself have said.

Scarcity of money has terrible consequences; it creates the tyranny of usury. Superabundance of money is far from presenting the same perils and engendering the like scourges; for when the circulating medium exceeds the wants, if it is not the effect of some sudden and violent measure, the excess is gradually annulled by an insensible depreciation, without having interrupted commercial relations and paralyzed labor in its course.

Let the attention of the reader be still maintained for a short time, for the most extravagant events which have ever tormented the imagination and agitated the heart of men, are to spring from out these cold abstractions, this dry exposition.

We now see why Law desired money to be abundant; we will now comprehend without difficulty why he preferred paper to metal, as money. It was not only because paper is easier to pay out, because it simplifies accounts and economizes time, because it is transported at less expense, because it is less liable to be counterfeited; these considerations, which are very weighty in an economical point of view, occupied but a secondary place in the thoughts of the Scottish statesman. What determined his preference for paper was this:

When a people wish to procure the precious metals in order to employ them as money, they must be extracted from the mines, which requires great advances and great labor, or they must be obtained from the foreigner and an equivalent commercial value must be offered him in exchange. The services rendered by metallic money are then onerous in their nature; they are not enjoyed until after they have been purchased. The creation of paper money on the contrary costs nothing, or almost nothing.

It being moreover impossible to increase the quantity of metallic money in a country but by labor in the mines or commerce with foreigners, it follows, that if amid the various channels of circulation, some are empty, gold and silver flow in slowly to refill them; and during this time, what failing exchanges, lost hours, dead capital. What anguish endured by the poor, who have neither food nor employment. What is paper money like? It is an instrument which the state procures at its will; it is an agent which it has always at hand; in a society in which all should not be abandoned to the disorders of individualism and the chances of competition, there could be a *quantity* which might approximately *equal the demand*.

Turgot and the economists of his school have laid it down as a principle, that money, in order to serve as a common measure of value, should of itself be an article of value, merchandize.* They have, therefore, declared that the precious metals, especially gold and silver, are more suitable than paper to perform the office of money. It is certain that specie has this advantage over paper, that it possess an intrinsic value of its own, independent of all agreement. Specie is the sign of riches, and is their *pledge*; it *represents* them and is *worth* them. It gives a security and guarantees to its possessor, which paper does not. Shall we conclude from this that Turgot and his disciples were right? Yes, in regard to the social order they had in view, a social order founded on individualism, upon the hatred and disarming of the principle of authority, upon an universal antagonism of interests, that is, upon a perpetual and inevitable system of distrust. But such was not the social order to which Law referred his theory of paper money. He united it, as will be soon seen, to a conception from which it cannot be separated, and which tended to establish a close union of efforts, interests and hopes among all the members of the same nation.

The principle of every regime of individualism is distrust; such a

* Turgot, Reflexions sur la formation et la distribution des richesses, S. 42. Edit. Guillaumin, t. 1.

regime should have specie for money. The principle of association is, confidence, credit; the money of association, is paper.

This was what Law foresaw, this was what was apparent to his prescursive genius, and it is this which explains that definition, so different from that which was afterwards given by Turgot: "Money is not the value *for* which merchandize is exchanged, but the value *by* which it is exchanged."* Turgot has put forth the following proposition in the form of an axiom. "Purely conventional money is an impossibility."† Law was so far from admitting this pretended axiom that he wrote, "If we establish a money which has no intrinsic value, or whose intrinsic value is such that it will never be exported, and the quantity of which shall never exceed the demand in the country, we shall have reached wealth and power."‡ We have said, Turgot's point of departure was the principle of competition; Law had in view the principle of association.

We may now judge of the revolutionary bearing of the principle which Law came to solve, and yet we have not yet pointed out the newest side, nor the most prominent aspect of this problem.

The wealth of a nation is composed not only of what the rich possess, material and present riches, but also of what the poor are worth, moral and future riches, and it is the continuous exchange of these two kinds of riches for each other that constitutes the industrial life of modern societies. But if the instrument of this exchange, or money, has an intrinsic and real, instead of a conventional price, if it becomes a part of the things which the rich possess, it is clear that the equilibrium is broken to the injury of the poor; for that which is indispensable to both, the first alone disposes of, and that is sufficient to assure to him a superiority of position, in which a thousand germs of tyranny are contained. Struck with the abuses which a series of private transactions, in which all the strength is on one side, causes, Law aspired to nothing less than to transport the care of bringing capital and labor together, from the individual to the state; the wealth of to-day and that of to-morrow.

The realization of such a plan was, in his opinion, intimately united with the adoption of paper money.

The active and industrious, but poor man, having nothing to give but a simple written promise in exchange for the necessities by which he lived and labored, Law proposed the creation of a state bank, whose mission should be to examine the promises of the poor man, to accept those which should be judged valuable, to replace them in the circulation by notes having the seal of the sovereign power, under the guarantee of the sovereign, fit in a word to perform the office of silver.

Law wished then to prevent those who carried their fortunes in themselves, from allowing the treasure of their intellect and strength to perish for want of employment. He wished that by means of a regular and permanent interference of the state, the intellectual and moral

* Œuvres de Law, considérations sur le numéraire, p. 143.

† Turgot, Reflexions sur la formation et la distribution des richesses, p. 42.

‡ Œuvres de Law, considérations sur le numéraire, p. 146.

faculties of the poor should be their sign and means of exchange as well as the material possessions of the rich. The latter were represented by metallic money; Law demanded the creation of paper money to represent the former. It was to found on the justice and interest of all, an exchange of existing riches against riches to be born, of what the one possessed against what the other are worth. It was to place the generative principle of public prosperity above the struggles of egotism and cupidity.

It was with such views, as noble as profound, that Law first urged the multiplication of money and then the adoption of a kind of money of which the state might dispose, and this is what those who have accused the Scotch economist of having sought the sources of strength and happiness elsewhere than in labor, have not perceived.

But did not Law deceive himself in giving the employment of paper money as a point of departure for a social revolution which would have been already half accomplished, if the adoption of paper money could have occurred without danger? Should he not have understood that under a prince plunged in skepticism and debauchery, in the midst of a licentious court, in a society still ignorant, still attainted with the folly of egotism, it was imprudent to touch that spring of paper money, which requires for it regular action, a preliminary education of the mind, the practice of the ideas of association, habits of confidence, an ensemble of new manners and institutions? Should not Law have properly ended where he began? The end of our recital will prove this.

Be this as it may, it was Law who introduced into France the idea of that famous system of assignats, which we shall afterwards find producing terrible results, but which we should not however condemn; for it redeemed passing calamities by immortal services, and enabled the French revolution to crush its enemies.

Power of the mind! A magic world was about to dawn. We are about to see, before the influence of a Scotchman, whom we might have believed armed with the wand of the fairies, a whole nation drunk with hope, classes confounded, ranks forgotten, metamorphoses as prodigious as sudden, the nobility wandering in the streets, old beggars clothed in gold and silk, thousands of men panting on the ladder of fortune, in fine a great people agitated, transformed, exalted, tormented, . . . and all effected by certain evolutions of thought in the brains of an unknown person. This same Law was then correct in saying that a single change in principles is of more importance to the fortune of empires than the loss or gain of a battle.

Law intended by the establishment of a general bank to make the state the disbursing officer of the public wealth, the treasurer of the rich, the banker of the poor. It is known that banks of discount never keep in their safes, as a reserve, but a part of the specie which corresponds to the paper they have issued. They use the rest and increase their profits thereby. The general bank would have done the same, only the state would have here received for the common interest, the profits, which, in the system of private establishments go to increase the profits of private

individuals. It would have divided the money placed in deposit in its coffers into two parts, the one destined, if necessary, to redeem the returning notes, the other to meet the public expenses.

It is true that this was investing the government with the right to touch the deposits as its wants required, but the depositors, according to Law, need not have disquieted themselves, since the integrality of the sums deposited was replaced in their hands, by notes serving as money and payable at the counter.

If, however, it should appear that government, not content with the disposable portion of specie concentrated in its vaults, should touch the *reserve*, would not the notes which had lost their pledge be discredited? Would not confidence vanish in a moment, and the credit system crumbling down suddenly, would not the depositors be crushed beneath its ruins? Law had foreseen the objection and replied to it as follows:—

“It is impossible that the king should ever touch the system,—for why should he? Would he prefer the money of the kingdom to his own credit? He has that already in supposition, and he would gratuitously lose a credit ten fold more valuable; it would be like a man, who, owning ten houses, should destroy nine to keep one which nobody disputes with him.”

Law was deceived this time; he thought that impossible in an absolute monarchy which could only be so under a regime of guarantees. He who can do too much, at last dares still more than he can do.

But the system of Law bore the impress of genius as a conception applicable to a democratic government. After having pointed out the calamities which distrust engenders when it rises as a barrier between the government and the people, Law exclaimed, “what principle can prevent so great an evil? I will tell it, notwithstanding the alarm it may produce in the vulgar man; it is, carry all the money to the king, not as a loan, the interest would be a charge to him; nor as taxes, his own advantage is to remove them, but as a pure deposit in a bank, only to be drawn out as you require it.”

Law maintained that he has thus reached a complete suppression of taxes and loans by a combination as novel as it was bold.

There were to be no more fiscal violences from that time. The odious importance of the farmers of the revenue would disappear. A portion of the circulating medium carried voluntarily to the common bank by the reflected confidence of the citizens, was to pay the expenses of the state; the cultivator would resume courage; the poor man begin to breathe; credit would pay the taxes.

To sum up this ensemble of ideas and to give a lively image to them, we shall say, that, according to Law, money was to the state, what blood was to the human body. He compared credit to the most subtle part of the blood, and as there is in the human body an organ of circulation, which is the heart, so he wished that there should have been in society an organ for the circulation of riches, which should have been the bank.

The philosophy of his system shines out in these beautiful words:—“Those who would amass money and retain it are like those parts or extremities of the human body which would stop on its passage the

blood that waters and nourishes them; they would soon destroy the principle of life in the heart, in the other parts of the body, and finally in themselves. The money is not yours but as giving you a right to call for it and make it pass through your hands, to satisfy your wants and desires; beyond this, the use of it belongs to your fellow citizens, and you cannot deprive them of it without committing a public injustice and a state crime. The money bears the mark of the prince and not yours, to warn you that it does not belong to you except for circulation, and that you are not permitted to appropriate it to yourself in any other sense.”*

Such language would not be extraordinary in the mouth of a man who had been roughly proved in the school of suffering, or attracted to austere studies by the practices of poverty. But when Law denounced so vehemently the systematic despotism of money, he was worth two millions.† His youth appeared to have been passed up to that time, but in undertaking prosperous journeys, or in trying chance and love. A fair conqueror in a duel in which the honor of a female was involved, and which Voltaire has calumniated by calling it a murder, he was forced to leave London. He had figured at Venice as a gentleman, and at Paris the Hotel de Gesvres had saluted the most magnificent of gamblers in him.‡ Such were the early habits of Law, so true is it that in certain natures, the honesty of the feelings springs from the beauty of genius alone.

Having reached the point where we are, the system of Law elevated itself, by expanding itself, to its admirable proportions. If commerce is an abundant source of wealth in a country, in which it is only carried on by individuals who mutually injure and ruin each other, in the midst of a confused strife, what should it be in a kingdom which should carry on commerce as a body, without however interdicting it to private individuals?§ And if a merchant is right in proportioning his plans and his hopes to the funds which he uses, what ought not an immense company to expect, which confounded with the state, enjoying its credit, supported by a general bank, should unite all the strength in a sheaff, should draw all scattered capital to a common centre, and armed for remote enterprises and vast designs, should march to the conquest of the happiness of men, under the standard, with the treasures and amidst the applause of a great people?

Thus the bank and the company, powerful twins, might have acted in concert. The first would have come to the aid of producers seeking advances; the second would have improved funds seeking an investment. The state, by means of the bank, would have become the depositary of the metallic money, the sign and pledge of wealth; by means of the company, it would have had the management of the wealth itself.

The reimbursement of the public debt would have besides become very easy; for the state could pay by associating its creditors in the profits of

* Deuxieme lettre sur le nouveau Systeme des finances.

† Hist. du Systeme des finances sous la minorité de Louis Quinze, t. 1, p. 78. La Haye, 1739.

‡ Ibid. t. 1, p. 70.

§ Deuxieme lettre sur le nouveau Systeme des finances; Mercure de France, March, 1720.

the company, and by giving them, instead of their certificates of loan, shares productive of an equal, perhaps superior interest.

With the bank then, there was no more borrowing, no more taxes; with the company, no more debts.

Such was the system which Law proposed in a moment of general distress and despair. The debt left by Louis the Fourteenth was, as we have said, two billions four hundred and twelve millions, and no resources with which to pay the interest. Most of the taxes were found to be eaten up in advance. A terrible tribunal, the *Chamber of Justice*, had been established, to the satisfaction of the people, to despoil and strike the farmers of the revenue, who were gorged with rapine; but there only resulted from it odious searches, vengeance, domestic treasons.* Encouraged by frightful edicts, informers multiplied, as in the times of degenerate Rome.† Money was hid, industry was dying; Law had an overburthened kingdom, a court at bay, thousands of creditors groaning or stupified, ministers at the end of their expedients, an empty treasury, imminent bankruptcy before his eyes.

His ardor was increased thereby; he developed some of his ideas with a simple and strong eloquence; he risked his fortune in the enterprise, a generosity full of grace;‡ he pleased the women, occupied the attention of the city, enchanted the court, and seduced the Regent.

The measures thus far taken by Law to insure the proposed establishment, were stamped with wisdom and prudence. He had foreseen all difficulties, replied to all objections. His confidence was so great, so sincere, that not content with pledging himself to give to the poor five hundred thousand livres from his own property,§ in case of a failure, he thought it his duty to write to the Regent: "The service of the King, the part which the Sieur Law has the honor to take in the interests of this kingdom and of his Majesty's servants, and also his own reputation lead him to insist on having the management of his affair. He knows himself to be capable of it, and answers with his head for his correctness, capacity and success."||

Philip hesitated however about entering on so novel a career, and Law had to commence by establishing a private bank. It was authorized to issue notes at sight, to discount bills of exchange, to open running accounts, on the payment of an almost imperceptible remuneration, and to manage the money of individuals.¶ Its capital, which was partially represented by state bonds, consisted of twelve hundred shares of a thousand crowns each, which made six millions; and Law brought two millions** which he had in Italy to sustain it.††

Its success was rapid, prodigious. The value of the notes having been declared to be inviolable, they were preferred to specie, whose value

* Lemontey, *Œuvres*, t. 6, p. 65.

† Premier mémoire sur les banques, p. 210.

‡ Letters patent of the King, May 2, 1716.

† Ibid.

§ Ibid. p. 202

|| Ibid. p. 216.

** Letters patent of the King, containing regulations for a general bank, given on the 20th of May, 1716.

†† Hist. du Système, t. 1. p. 78. Law says in his *Mémoires justificatifs*, that he took eighteen hundred thousand livres with him to France, the mark of silver being then twenty-eight livres.

the perpetual variations had decried. Gold and silver flowed into the bank to be exchanged for paper. Confidence was restored, the circulation resumed its course, foreigners reappeared in our market, whence they had been driven by the uncertainty of negotiations, the bitter and inevitable fruit of so many financial revolutions; they blessed the fortunate Scotchman, they believed, they hoped.

The Regent, marvelling and decidedly convinced, then determined to yield to the promises of Law and his ready genius. An edict ordered the tax collectors to receive payments in the notes, and to the accounting officers to pay at sight the notes which should be presented to them.* The paper of Law conquered the whole kingdom by these means. His bank acquired an increasing importance, and began to be confounded with the government. It multiplied its benefits, by extending its empire and bursts of enthusiasm soon succeeded the mournful supineness, into which France was plunged. But, thanks to our American possessions, the system of Law was to be elevated to higher and more stormy destinies.

The celebrated traveller, La Salle, descended the Illinois river in 1682, and suddenly found himself in the midst of a great unknown stream. Surprised and charmed, he followed its immense course, explored its banks, gained many savage people by his presents, and on quitting the country gave to it the name of Louisiana. He returned thither to perish there; his nephew and domestics assassinated him.† But his labors were not lost to us. Resumed by Hyberville, they caused the deserts of the New World, to salute the flag of France, and the American Nile to flow through our increased domain.

The Spaniards of Mexico were moved by it; the English of Virginia and Carolina took umbrage at it. And what conquest could have been more precious. A country, larger than Europe and watered through a course of a thousand leagues by a magnificent stream, a land rich in grain and fruits, beautiful rivers‡ abounding in fish, and labors to accomplish, but not a drop of blood to shed, to obtain possession. The sight of Louisiana alone was enough moreover to inflame the imagination, by its vigorous and varied vegetation, its immense prairies and the majesty of its forests, ornamented with a head dress of vines. It was the same country, whose beauty has been so poetically described by an illustrious writer of our days; "The banks of the Meschacebe or Mississippi present the most extraordinary picture; the prairies of the western bank roll away until lost from sight; their floods of verdure appear, in the distance, to mount to the azure of the heaven, in which they vanish. Flocks of three or four thousand savage buffaloes are seen wandering at their pleasure in these boundless prairies. Sometimes an old bison, swimming through the waves, reaches an island of the river, to lie down amidst its tall grass. From his forehead adorned with two crescents, his antique and slimy beard, you might take him for the river god, casting a

* Decree of the King's Council of the 10th of April, 1717, extracted from the registers of the Council of State.

† Hist. du Système, p. 97.

‡ Ibid. t. 1, p. 98 and 99.

glance of satisfaction over the grandeur of his waves, and the savage abundance of his shores."

Law resolved to make an opulent colony out of this country. Only timid attempts had as yet been made there; to render them fruitful, he formed a company with which he set his system in motion.

A new era was about to commence for burgherism.

How rapid is the advance of things when urged on by an idea? Who would have believed, during the last years of the preceding century, in the midst of the splendor in which the gentry and their glorious chief were shining, that in so short a time an association of merchants, invested with the prerogatives of sovereign power, would be formed in France; that this association, commissioned to explore remote possessions, would receive the right of constructing forts in them, of levying troops, and of establishing in them high justiciary lords as judges, of declaring war, of equipping vessels; that it should have armies; that it would count the Regent of France himself among its directors, and that to place it in a condition to absorb veteran soldiers, faculty should be granted to nobles to stray thither without derogation.*

The new company received the name of the *Company of the West*. Its letters patent contain this remarkable clause: "Our intention being to allow the greatest possible number of our subjects to participate in the commerce of this company, and the advantages to be derived from it, and that all may be interested in it in proportion to their means, it is our will that the capital of this company be divided into shares of five hundred livres each." Was there not a revolution in these words?†

But revolutions are not accomplished without wounding a thousand interests, and exciting implacable hatreds. Law had scarcely entered on his career, when he began to count his enemies; the parliamentarians, because he threatened the venality of officers; the lawyers, because they saw the diminution of law-suits; the farmers of the revenue, because he undertook to drive obscurity and confusion, the sources of so much odious profit, from the management of the public funds; all the old financiers, because the new combinations appeared to accuse them of incompetency; many influential personages, because they were jealous of the favor shown a stranger. D'Argenson, who had recently, as the successor of D'Augesseau and the Duke de Noailles, united the offices of justice and the finances, was at the head of the last.

D'Argenson signalized his debut by an edict which ordered a general re-coinage, and a large increase in the value of the currency. It was evidently a blow struck at the new system of Law; for what can be imagined more fatal to a growing system of credit than an overrating of specie, so adapted to create trouble and confusion in commerce? The adversaries of Law, and those who were jealous of him, attributed this edict of May, the work of his enemy, as a crime to him.‡ They feigned to be ignorant that d'Argenson then governed the finances, that he directed them imperiously, and that Law, far from approving of agitations in

* Letters patent in the form of an edict, granted at Paris, in the month of August, 1717.

† Ibid.

‡ Vie de Phillipe d'Orleans, par M. L. D. M., t. 1. p. 256 et 257.

the currency, had demonstrated their inconveniences and dangers with much vigor in his writings.* Paris Duverney must be placed at the head of those who unjustly attributed the recoinage to Law. In a book, in which he proposes to refute Dutot, who is one of the apologists of the celebrated Scotchman, the future confidant of the Marchioness de Prie, is astonished at, and complains of, the silence kept by Dutot concerning the edict of May.† If Dutot does not speak of this edict, it is for the simple reason that Law was not the author of it. In fact it is not found in the Collection of Memorials, letters patent, declarations and decrees relating to the system.‡

Be that as it may, Parliament having opposed the recoinage in a decree dated June the 20th, 1718, Law bore in the eyes of his detractors the responsibility of the struggle about to ensue between the court and parliament, a very active struggle, which caused the press of the parliament to be blocked by musketeers, and urged the royal authority, which was threatened, to seek victory in force.

Other more direct attacks succeeded this first. Parliament, irritated by its recent defeat, prohibited the accounting officers from receiving the notes of the bank in payment of taxes, and all foreigners, even though naturalized, from any share in the management of the royal revenues.§ Paris was at once agitated and the court alarmed. It was known that the Duke and Duchess of Maine had been solely occupied for a long time with breathing into the magistracy the ardor of the anger with which they were animated. The reading of the memoirs of Cardinal de Mazarin, of Joly, of Madame de Motteville, had, says Saint Simon, turned all heads. Troubles were about to revive, they were very sure of finding Bruosels, and many were alarmed or rejoiced in the prospect of a new Fronde. The animosity of the parliament against Law had all the characteristics of furious ignorance. They had it in agitation "to send officers some morning to seek for him, having in their hands a warrant for his arrest, after a personal citation, and to hang him within three hours in an enclosure of the palace."|| A vigorous action could alone save him, and it did. Phillippe, after some hesitation, decided to strike a great blow. On the 26th of August Parliament was summoned to the Thuilleries. It reached there on foot, in red robes, and the registry of the edicts concerning the bank is imposed on it in a bed of justice.

The enemies of Law determined to fight him with his own arms. They brought the general farm-lettings into play. D'Argenson adjudged them to his protégés in the name of Aymard Lambert, his valet de chambre,¶ and he opposed the skill of the four brothers Paris, whom for-

* See the whole of chapter 4 of the *Considerations sur le Numeraire, Œuvres de Law*, p. 61. et suiv.

† Examen du livre intitulé: *Reflexions Politiques sur les Finances*, t. 1. p. 221.

‡ In his remarkable notice of Law, in which, besides he does not appear to us to have rendered him justice, M. Eugene Daire has addressed the same reproach to M. Thiers which Paris Duverney addressed to Dutot, and without more reason. See la *Collection des Economistes*, p. 449. Paris, Che. Guillaumin.

§ Extract from the Parliamentary Register.

|| *Memoires de Saint Simon*, t. 16. chap. 22. p. 428. Edit. Santelet. Paris, 1829.

¶ *Hist. du Système*, t. 1. p. 115.

tune and their intelligence had drawn from a tavern to introduce into state affairs, to the genius of Law.*

But Law had to dread his protectors more than his enemies.

It was a part of his plan that the bank founded by him should be declared royal, that the shareholders should be reimbursed, and that the king should guarantee the notes. He could not avoid a feeling of alarm when approaching this question. Would the regent abandon him to himself? This was what Law doubted. He asked that the bank, once declared royal, should be placed under the supervision of a special commission taken from the four great courts of the kingdom; that of aids, of the mint, of the chamber of accounts and the parliament.† The regent, as was to have been expected, rejected all control. Law should have better understood the fatal bearing of such a refusal, and have then retired. His soul, unfortunately, had not as much strength as genius, and besides, the regent was one of those amiable and corrupt princes who exercise an invincible seduction over those whom their favor soils. The same weakness made Law yield on a point of equal importance. As long as he was at the head of a private bank, he desired the notes to remain invariable in value, that they might be preferred to specie, which frequent changes troubled. But when it became a question of making a political institution of the bank, Law feared lest too great an advantage given to the note over specie should become a dangerous bait for the crowd, and for the government an occasion of breaking at its caprice the proportion which, under the circumstances, should be maintained between coin and paper. What had appeared to him to be good in an establishment which he alone was to manage, he regarded, with reason, as injurious in one over which the will of a dissipated prince was to weigh, who was indifferent as to the public good, and for whom the alteration of the coin was but a sport. The author of the system was then careful to omit in the statutes of the royal bank that clause of the invariability of the note, which had, however, made the success of his private bank.‡ But the regent was not long in repairing the omission. Five months had not elapsed after the transformation of the general into the royal bank, when there appeared an edict which declared the note not liable to the diminution with which the coin appeared to be menaced.§

What is most striking in a careful study of the voluminous collection of the edicts concerning the system is, that they show two sets of regulations contradictory on all points. The one are derived from the principles developed by Law in his writings; the other, on the contrary, are dictated by the avidity of the court, and having the destruction or falsification of the first for their end. This is what has not been remarked, and which has drawn upon Law the accusations due to the cupidity of his all powerful protector and to the malice of his enemies. His true crime was weakness, and it is one by which the fate of people in those high spheres is moved.

* *Memoires de Saint Simon*, t. 18. p. 135.

† *Œuvres de Lemontey*, t. 6. p. 399.

‡ Declaration of the king, made at Paris on the 4th of December, 1718.

§ Decree of the king's council of state of the 22d of April, 1819. Extracted from the Registries of the Council of State.

Law pursued the accomplishment of his designs through a crowd of obstacles and embarrassments. The capital of the *Company of the West* had been fixed at an hundred millions, and was divided into two hundred thousand shares of five hundred livres each. Law decided that they should be paid in bonds of the state; the company by this means would only become the proprietor of a paper capital, producing four millions of income, and as nothing would have remained, if it had been obliged to give to the shareholders in the form of dividend, what it received from the government in the form of interest, it was agreed that the interest for the first year should be surrendered to him, in order to form its productive funds. He needed other resources, but in adopting at first a combination, which at first sight is only striking from its strangeness, he had in view a bold and profound end. He was desirous not only of building up again the course of the royal purposes by affording them an outlet, but also to commence the realization of the social side of his system, and we have seen that this system consisted in forming, under the direction of the state, an immense commercial association, which should bind all existences together, and consequently make every lender an associate with his borrower, every bond holder a shareholder, and all interest, dividends.

But large and disposable funds were necessary to attain the end of these proposed operations. Law united the commerce of the West Indies with that of the East Indies and of China, which was languishing, and he used the opportunity to emit fifty thousand new shares, which were called the *daughters*,* because, in order to obtain one, it was necessary to present four of the old. These fifty thousand new shares produced, at five hundred and fifty livres each, twenty-seven million five hundred thousand livres in silver, and the company which, towards the close of the preceding year, had purchased the tobacco lease, commenced its operation on an imposing scale.

The company had, moreover, and before the union of the two, which took place in June, 1719, formed an establishment at St. Joseph's Bay; it had sent a governor with troops to Illinois, and workmen to raise tobacco; it had acquired sixteen vessels, ten of which had started for Louisiana with seven hundred recruits, five hundred inhabitants, and the munitions which the foundation of a colony requires.†

Soon measuring its ambition by its success, it purchased from the king, for fifty millions, the right of coining money for nine years. It put out a third series of shares to pay for this, which were called *grand-daughters*, and such was its credit, that those shares, though issued nominally for five hundred livres only, actually brought a thousand.

Law then hesitated no longer to broach a gigantic project which he had long meditated, and which was to crown his enterprise.

He offered, what was accepted, to pay, with the product of new shares, the debts of the state to the amount of fifteen hundred millions, provided, 1st. That the state would engage to pay the company an annual sum of

* Dutot, *Reflexions Politiques sur les finances*, t. 2. p. 343. La Haye, 1743.

† Forbonnet, *Recherches et considerations sur les finances de France*, t. 2. p. 589.

‡ Dutot, *Reflexions Politiques sur les finances*, t. 2. p. 344.

forty-five millions, and 2d. That the general leases should be taken from the brothers Paris and be adjudged to the company.*

As the state had until then paid sixty millions annually to its creditors as interest on fifteen hundred millions, it was to be a gainer by the new arrangement of fifteen millions a year.

It is true that these fifteen millions fell as a charge upon the company, but it refunded them in the profits of the leases; and it was, moreover, rid of a rival association.

To realize the plan, it was agreed that three hundred thousand shares should be added to the three hundred thousand already created, of which one hundred thousand should be issued on the 13th of September, 1719. The product was to serve in paying the creditors, and for this purpose they agreed to take *receipts of reimbursement*. But whilst the creditors were restrained by the formalities which the delivery of the receipts involved, others fell upon the shares which had been issued, and with such zeal, that they ran up at once to five thousand livres. The titularies of the public debt then complained, that the investment of the capital, reimbursed by the state, was about to escape from them, and Law did justice to their demands by the decree of the 26th of September, which ordered that no more subscriptions should be allowed but to those who should pay a tenth down in state bonds, notes of the common coffer, or in receipts.† Could the creditors desire more? When the receipts became the compulsory payment for shares, it was impossible that the value of the first should not increase proportionably with the height of the second. Law did not then endeavor to frustrate the creditors, as some have advanced on the authority of Paris Duverney,‡ who was so interested in lowering in Law, a genius superior to his own, and a rival who had conquered him.

We would surpass the limits of our subject were we to follow all the details of so vast an operation. But the effect which it produced has a too direct connection with that transformation of manners and that displacement of strength, out of which the revolution was to spring, for us not to pause over it.

The excitement caused by the sale of the shares was intense. Who has not heard of the Rue Quincampoix and its stormy renown? Impatience of gain, the hope of retrieving a ruined fortune quickly, a presumptuous desire to brave destiny, a need of forgetfulness and of excitement, the poignant uncertainties which the heart in its folly dreads and seeks, the torments of which it is greedy, were all found strongly raised and at play within the space of a few feet. Thus, courtiers, churchmen, courtezans, members of parliament, monks, abbés, clerks, soldiers, adventurers from every part of Europe hastened to the Rue Quincampoix, to be rolled in a heap and mingled together in a huge pell-mell. The inequality of ranks disappeared there before the equality of human weaknesses and passions. The pride of the great ones of the earth was publicly drawn out to receive an exemplary chastisement

* Decree of the King's Council of State of the 27th of August, 1719.

† Decree of the King's Council of State of the 26th of September, 1719.

‡ *Examen des Reflexions Politiques sur les finances*, t. 1. p. 254.

in the eyes of the multitude. Fraternity reigned through stockjobbing until something better turned up. Prelates dragged the Roman purple through the mob, and princes of the blood bought or sold the paper between courtézans and lackeys. Even foreign sovereigns had their representatives in the thickest of this crowd, which was by turns drunk with hope or frozen by alarm, a confused, entangled, palpitating crowd, which the ebb and flow of play agitated incessantly, and from which a sinister noise arose. There was not a house in the famous street which was not divided into dens for speculators. Avidity took up its abode in them from the roof to the cellar. They stock-gambled by the light of the sun, and also by that of torches. To own a miserable shop in this quarter, was to have one's hand upon a gold mine. Women are cited, a dame Savalette, a dame de Villemur, who took their meals amidst the noise of these fabulous jousts.* There were offices for sale and purchase; here was that of the *Sieur le Grand*, the treasurer of France, there that of the *Sieur Negret de Granville*, an old farmer of the aids and domains. A place was wanted to write upon; they had recourse to living desks, and the unfortunate made fortunes by hiring out their shoulders;† they would have hired their souls; as long as the fever lasted, paper had the advantage over gold which the imagination has over the reality. Thus two men drew their swords one day in the street, the seller of shares wishing to be paid in paper and the buyer of them wishing to pay in gold. The confusion soon became so great, that it became necessary to have a guard of archers, commanded by an officer of the Short Robe, at each end of the street. Regular agitations still more terrible succeeded this tumultuous agitation. The *Le Blancs*, the *Verzenobres*, the *Andrés*, the *Pavillons*, the *Fleury*s, commanded the movements by their emissaries, and kept the key of the storm-bag. A stroke on the bell from the office of *Pavillon* raised the price of shares, a whistle from the office of *Fleury* depressed them.‡

A sudden, unheard of, almost incredible and violent elevation awaited those who realized their gains on paper in time. A Savoyard named *Chambery* became a millionaire, because having been a floor scrubber to a banker in the *Rue Saint Martin*, he had found out favourable opportunities to speculate. A merchant of *Namours*, called in the history of the system, *La Chaumont*, made enough in a few months to purchase a signorial estate in a province, and the hotel at Paris, in which the Archbishop of *Cambray* lived. There was a general upsetting of fortunes; there was a metamorphosis in situations, comparable only with the ancient *Saturnalia*.

Law had not believed that the minds of men could have reached this degree of excitement. He perceived with pain, that by overstraining his system, they were preparing its fall, and to stop the rise of shares, he issued more, in a single week in the month of November, 1719, to the amount of thirty millions. Tardy prudence! the shares which had already gone up to ten thousand livres, were to go higher. The explosion, moreover, was serious from its very excess. It had, however, an

* Hist. du Système, t. 2. p. 50.

† Ibid. p. 54.

‡ Ibid. p. 84.

immense bearing, and prepared the grand drama of the Revolution in several different ways.

What above all could be more disastrous for a nobility, formerly so bold, so chivalric, so passionate in the pursuit of glory, so full of contempt for money, than that unforeseen mixture of classes, that prodigious mobility introduced into fortunes, that triumph of the games of commerce over those of war? When Turmienes said to the Duke de Bourbon, who showed him his portfolio, "Fie, sir, your grandfather would not have had but five or six, but they would have been worth more than all yours,"* he measured in a word the fatal career which was run in less than three years by the nobility. It, in fact, surpassed its old follies by its new avidity. The Duke de Bourbon and the Prince de Conti, were at the head of the speculators of renown, and the nobles followed in crowds. Many of the gentry surrounded the door of Law, the chief distributor of subscriptions, and passed whole hours there waiting for his presence, with a sordid anxiety, begging a look from him as a favor, and wearying his contempt by the excess and degradation of their cupidity. Not content with flattering him, recently an obscure stranger, and the son of a goldsmith of Edinburgh, they flattered his mistress, his daughter, still a child, even Thierry, his valet. The court of Law was increased by many women of quality, momentarily escaped from the court of the Regent, and the governor of the bank became the object of their pursuits, the ardor of gain silencing their shame. Nothing was omitted, which was of a nature to dissipate all old prestiges. It was in the company of the Fargez, and the Poterats, that Louis Henry de Bourbon, the Marshal d'Estrées, the Prince de Valmont, the Baron Breteuil, managed the business. In the list of the directors of the India Company, might be read by the side of the name of the Regent of France, that of Saint-Edme, known at the fair of Saint Laurent, as the chief of the mountebanks.† It was thus that the people became accustomed to measure with a bold eye the distance that separated them from the great. It spread abroad in biting railleries. The revolutionary feeling, formed by hatred, was fortified by disdain. The walls of Paris were covered with placards which appeared to announce those which afterwards characterized a period for ever tragical. One of those placards made an army out of the crowd of stock gamblers, to which they outrageously assigned the Duke of Orleans as generalissimo, the Marshal d'Estrées, M. de Chaulnes, the Duke de Guiche, as generals, the Duke de la Force as treasurer, and Mesdames de Verrue, de Prie, de Sabran, de Gié, de Neale, de Polignac as sutlers. Sombre warnings, at which the nobility only laughed, but which did not prevent them from hurling themselves into abasement. A great Lord, the Marquis d'Oyse, the son and younger brother of the Dukes de Villars-Brancas, was shameless enough to take the daughter of the stock-gambler André, only three years old, as his wife, on condition that her dowry should be paid in advance.‡ When the speculators, towards the close of the system, sought an asylum where the sabres of the archers could not reach them, it was a noble, the

* *Memoires de Saint Simon*, t. 18, p. 184.

† Extracted from the Register of the India Company, February 22d, 1720.

‡ *Memoires de Saint Simon*, t. 18, p. 189.

Prince de Carignan, who received them, by hiring them his garden, and to compel the stock jobbers to use it, he obtained an ordinance which prohibited any bargain from being concluded elsewhere than in the barracks he had erected.* What features can we add to so sad a picture? One day the people saw a man broken alive upon the wheel upon the Place de Greve, who had assassinated the owner of a portfolio in order to rob him. It was the Duke d'Arenberg, a relative of the Regent, and the grandson of the Prince de Ligne.

We can now judge what the nobility was doing for its own ruin. Louis the Eleventh had restrained it, Richelieu had decimated it, it was dishonoring itself under the Regent. And it was a successor of this same Regent who applauded as it mounted the scaffold.

Whilst the aristocracy was descending, burgherism was ascending on a parallel line; for if the system of Law ruined as many families as it enriched by the gambling which was its consequence, on the other side it roused the nation from its torpor and drove a thousand spurs into its flank. There were some among the Mississippians, as the speculators who had suddenly become rich were called, who dreamed only of enjoying with splendor the advances of fortune; labor was powerfully fructified by them. Some of them recommended themselves to their native cities, by useful prodigalities, as Ranly who repaired the bridge of Castres. Others demanded rich tapestries, magnificently sculptured furniture from the parts. A third class called rare productions from afar, and gave repasts which equalled the historical festivities of Otho and of Anthony in voluptuous refinement. An old garde du corps, indulged in some plate which the King of Portugal had ordered by out-bidding him. An author of the time thus recounts the luxuriousness of a Mississippian: "The rarest and most delicate dishes, the most exquisite wines, every thing that the most voluptuous gourmand could imagine was upon the table. Desserts were served up of a nature to surprise the most expert machinists. Large fruits, which might have deceived the keenest eyes, were made in so skilful a manner, that when some one, astonished at seeing a fine melon in mid winter, reached out to touch it, it threw out at once several small fountains of different kinds of liquors, which diffused a delightful odor around; whilst the Mississippian pressing his foot upon an imperceptible spring, caused an artificial figure to make a tour of the table, in order to pour nectar to the ladies before whom he stopped it."† The expenses soon equalled the gain. It resulted from it, that the number of manufactures increased, that the arms of mendicants found employment, that industry had wings. Interest fell, usury was crushed. Dwellings were erected in the cities; those which were falling to ruins were repaired. The system finally recalled a multitude of citizens to their country whom misery had driven away.‡ Genoa sent all it possessed in damask and velvets.§ The streets of Paris were encumbered with carriages. Furrowed by a crowd of provincials whom

* *Memoires Secrets de Duclos*, t. 16, p. 567.

† *Hist. du Systeme*, t. 2. p. 119.

‡ Ordinance of the king of the 15th of October, 1719, cited by Dutot, t. 2. p. 254.

§ *Ceuvres de Lemontey*, t. 6. p. 311.

the capital attracted,* France presented an unaccustomed movement, which hastened modern centralization.

But what was of greater importance for burgherism was, that the system of Law, having remote discoveries as its basis, promised the empire of the sea to it, and tended to elevate France to the first rank among maritime and colonial nations. England understood this; she perceived with terror the lever in our hands which she used to raise the world, and it was she who overthrew Law and his system by means of her agents in council of the regency.

It remains for us to show the two contradictory movements which divided the history of the regency and have not ceased to rule the policy of the house of Orleans. Law opened the paths of the sea to burgherism by his system of finances; Dubois was about to close them by his diplomatic system. Law gave France as a rival to the English; Dubois submitted her to them. Law, by pushing on French burgherism to the commercial conquest of the globe, would but have transformed the national character; Dubois degraded it, by precipitating us into an alliance which communicated the mercantile passions of the English to us, whilst at the same time it deprived us of the means of equalling their boldness and greatness.

The policy of Louis the Fourteenth had consisted in protecting the secondary states, in fortifying France by intimacy with Spain, in restraining Austria from encroaching on Italy, in humbling Holland, in ruling England or in giving her employment at home, the first by pensioning her king, and the second by reviving the remains of the Stuart party.

It was then a profound and truly French policy. As protectress of the states of the second order, France interested a large part of Europe in her safety; she created positions for herself on all points; she was assured of an unique and glorious part among the principal powers. She preserved freedom of action in the south, by means of the friendship of Spain, which permitted her to face the north, where her most serious subjects of disquietude lay. She was commanded to watch Austria, by the interest which calls her to the control of the Mediterranean, and by the recollection of the mishaps which the double monarchy of Charles the Fifth caused her. The abasement of England and Holland became absolutely necessary to her, since Colbert had invited her to commerce and had shown her the ocean.

But Phillippe had motives of self-interest for abandoning the traditions of the cabinet of Versailles, and he sacrificed his own honor and the fortune of the country unhesitatingly to them.

Should a feeble child, Louis the Fifteenth, die, the regent would fill the throne, unless Philip the Fifth, King of Spain, disavowing a forced renunciation should claim the inheritance of his grandfather, Louis the Fourteenth. The regent had then to dread a future rival in Philip the Fifth, and it was the more necessary for his ambition to seek an auxiliary, and if need be, an accomplice in the King of England. George the First was on his side threatened by the Jacobites. Like disquiets united

the two princes; only, and this should not be forgotten in the history of the development of French burgherism, the King of England appeared in this alliance as the protector, and the Duke of Orleans as the protected.

We must read the secret memoirs and unedited correspondence of the Abbé Dubois, collected by Sevelinges, to know with what servile anxiety the Regent, immediately after his installation, begged the favor of the English. Not content with acting through the Marquis of Châteauneuf at the Hague, and M. d'Iberville at London, he employed the venal pen of Dubois with Lord Stanhope.

"I should be charmed," wrote the latter to Lord Stanhope, "should my master take the measures most suitable for his own interest, and that it should be with a nation for which I have always felt a partiality, and during the ministry of a friend as estimable and solid as yourself. In addition, my Lord, to the interests of our two masters, I declare I should be delighted if you should drink of the better wine of France instead of that of Portugal, and I, of the cider of the golden pippin, instead of the rough cider of Normandy."*

Lord Stanhope replied with a contemptuous and calculating coldness to advances whose baseness was but imperfectly covered by buffoonery. He was determined to make us buy the support of England by the sacrifice of our maritime existence, that is by the only thing which could give a character of solidity and grandeur to the sway of French burgherism.

Louis the Fourteenth had bound himself by the treaty of Utrecht, to demolish the fortifications of Dunkirk, to fill up the port and ruin the sluices. But history owes him this justice, that if he yielded, it was with groans, with despair in his soul, after a terrible war and a series of unexampled calamities. He did not, however, listen to surrendering the channel to the English, to recognizing their right over the sea, so insolently proclaimed by Selden, and the proof is, that he commenced immediately a new port at Mardyck. The interruption of the labors which had been commenced and the destruction of Mardyck, was the price which England placed on its alliance with the regent. It exacted besides, that the Chevalier St. George, the heir of the Stuarts, unfortunate and proscribed, should be brutally chased away from Avignon, and that it should be done before the signature of the treaty, or at least before the exchange of ratifications.

The guarantee of the eventual rights of Philip to the crown, was, as is seen, to cost France dear, and there needed an excess of humiliation of which the Abbé Dubois was alone capable of sharing the advantages and the opprobrium, to subscribe to such conditions. The negotiation was thus confided to him, and as it was desired to keep it secret, he made a pretence of wishing to buy some rare books and the *Seven Sacraments* of Poussin to go to the Hague where Lord Stanhope awaited him. It was there, that Dubois by the light of a lamp in a tavern, and concealing himself as if he were committing a crime, laid the basis of the system which led to the annihilation of our marine. Four months had not elapsed, when the system was consecrated by that famous treaty of the

* Correspondance inedite du Cardinal Dubois, t. 1. p. 174.

triple alliance, which lost us Mardyck and procured the naval tutelage of the English for us. It was signed on the 28th of November, at midnight, and the better to mark its insulting bearing, England drew up the fourth article so as to make it appear that France had been faithless in the execution of her engagements concerning Dunkirk. Lord Cardogan also imperiously demanded that the two copies of the treaty should, contrary to usage, be drawn up in Latin; the words *King of France*, were erased in the ratifications and replaced by the *Most Christian King*, the title of King of France only belonging, according to the English negotiators, to the sovereign of Great Britain. Finally, and to crown the outrage, the new friend of the regent prescribed to him the reception of an English commissioner, commissioned to superintend the demolition of the port.

Thus were the interests of burgherism compromised and served abroad by the leader whom it had given to itself.

The destruction of the canal of Mardyck overwhelmed the cabinet of St. James with joy. Craggs, one of the ministers of George the First, wrote to Dubois:—

"The king yesterday received the news of your appointment to the post of secretary of state for foreign affairs. He has ordered me to congratulate you for him and to say, that it is the best news he has had for a long time. . . . I now expect to see the same interests cultivated in the two kingdoms, and that there will be no longer but the same ministry."*

Dubois replied—

"If I follow the impulse of my gratitude and were not restrained by respect, I would write to him to thank him for the place to which the regent has appointed me, since I owe it only to the desire he had of not employing any one in the common affairs of England and France who was not agreeable to the King of Great Britain."†

Dubois was not indeed long in finishing his work by the treaty of the quadruple alliance, which overthrowing all our old fœderative system, prepared a sight for Europe as scandalous as unlooked for. Then France was seen concerting with Holland, Austria, and above all England, against Spain her sister; and the policy of Richelieu and Louis the Fourteenth, driven from the councils of the regent, became that of Alberoni and entered through him into the counsels of the Escurial.

Skilful in profiting by the transports of an Amazonian queen, and the imbecility of that Philip the Fifth of whom it was said, "he needed but a kneeling stool and a woman," Alberoni, the son of an Italian gardener, had risen to the disposal of Spain. He would have been more than a mere adventurer, if his bold mind had not been badly served by the trifling of his heart. He opposed the excess of insolence, knavery, armed invasions, intrigues, conspiracies, revolts to the monstrous league which was formed against him. He employed Austria through the Turks, he employed James the Third and the phantom of a civil war against England, he tried plots against the regent, he fomented the revolt of the Breton gentry, he shone by such violences, that distant

* Correspondance inédite du Cardinal Dubois, t. 1, p. 244.

† Ibid.

colonies felt the rebound, and he had the honor of rendering his fall necessary to the quiet of Europe.

We should not forget what was then happening in France. The two branches of the house of Bourbon, the nephew and the grandson of Louis the Fourteenth, were carrying on a cruel and senseless war amidst the applauses of our rejoicing enemies. French soldiers hastened under the leading of the English Berwick, to attack the king whom France had given to Spain, and it was beneath the eyes, by the order and at a signal from an English emissary sent expressly from London to order us to perform savage exploits, that French torches burned the remains of the Spanish marine in the roads of Santigua. Alberoni fell, and the results were, the acquisition of Sicily for Austria, the aggrandisement of an already alarming maritime sway for Great Britain, and the disgrace of a war in which its enemies had used it against itself for France.

In writing to Lord Stanhope, "I owe you even the place I occupy, and I am anxious to use it according to your wishes, that is for the service of his Britanic majesty."* Dubois was pledged to betray his country. He kept his word, and it would appear as if the infamy of his success should have been sufficient to have contented him, but there were more notable services for him to perform for those to whom he wrote, "I owe the place I occupy to you."

Law had not been able to direct the thoughts of France to a vast colonial system, without awakening British jealousy. His destruction was sworn at London. It was important not to make a quick attack and above all not to display the reasons. This the ambassador of England, a man hot-headed to thoughtlessness and rash by force of impertinence, did not understand. Stairs attacked Law at a time when it would not have been either easy or advantageous to overthrow him. Law felt his strength, he alarmed the regent, who still had need of him by his prompt retreat, and Dubois wrote at once to Destouches his agent in London :—

"I thought Mr. Law would have remained on terms of moderation with Lord Stanhope, but I have since learned that he is very much changed against the court of London, and that he had induced M. le Blanc, the minister of war, to enter into his views, and that they were attacking me, as prepossessed in favor of and favoring England. . . . It is important to recall Lord Stairs without delay, a longer sojourn might bring about some outbreak which would be impossible to remedy."†

The same letter contained this characteristic passage :—"M. de Sennerre carries M. de Pléneuf with him. Both are very intimate friends of M. le Blanc, who is in the entire confidence of M. Law in every thing that concerns England. Conduct yourself with great respect towards him, but be careful to take all possible precautions to learn the principal connections of the ambassador and the chief persons of his family, and never to write to me about these matters except by express. M. de Sen-

* Correspondance inédite du Cardinal Dubois, t. 1. p. 247.

† Ibid. t. 1. p. 312.

neterre, the ambassador from France, starts to-morrow. I have thought it best to advise you of this beforehand, and that you should not communicate absolutely with any person except Lord Stanhope."*

Stairs was then recalled; but that did not prevent England from pushing on the plot to success by underhand measures, of which a letter cited further on will furnish the proof and point out the authors. The manœuvres commenced in December, 1719. The enemies of Law, by means of secret emissaries scattered through the crowd, sowed those vague uncertainties and doubts which are mortal to every credit system. But they did not confine the effects of their hatred to this. They determined to reduce the royal bank to the necessity of refusing payment for its notes. A foreign company had funds in it to the amount of several millions; it was suddenly demanded.† The bank paid nobly without hesitation, but Law had received a dark warning. He went to the regent with his heart full of grief and indignation, and presented to him a plan for diminishing the value of the gold coin. His end was to bring back the gold which had been carried away, and he succeeded. But to be condemned to such expedients is to be lost already.

It must be admitted that the height of the shares was monstrous, and Law had himself contributed to it, from not having foreseen the excess. A fall was then inevitable. We may be permitted to believe that it would not have entailed the fall of the system also, if a combination of perfidiously calculated measures and suggestions had not given the violence of a panic to it. Unfortunately the exaggerated figure of the fall lent distrust and appeared to justify the alarmists. The desire of realizing, at first restrained, gains gradually and acquires an irresistible impetuosity as it progresses. Every one was soon desirous of having houses, rich stuffs, land, precious stones, in exchange for paper which was threatened with ruin. Shares were offered every where for bank notes, which in their turn were offered for objects of merchandize or specie. What was to be done? To essay a general interdict against luxury, to lance decrees against the value of gold, to proscribe precious stones by an ordinance? The fall was sudden, terrible. Law was driven by the realizers to the adoption of a system that he had condemned a thousand times, that was to render him odious, and that could not save him, that of the systematic alteration of the coin; an abyss was opening beneath his feet.

He did not however lose confidence in his destiny; the year 1720 was commencing; a convert to the Catholic faith from ambition, and recently appointed comptroller general, Law determined to move men's souls by a brilliant measure, and he appeared, followed by the principal personages of the kingdom, in the Rue Quincampoix where his presence was saluted by lively acclamations. His popularity was still so great that the crowd cried on his passage, "*Hurrah for the King and Monseigneur Law.*"‡ More sensible to this spontaneous outburst of enthusiasm, than to the servile homages of the courtiers, he mounted a balcony, and bestowed a

* Correspondance inédite du Cardinal Dubois, t. 1, p. 312 et 318.

† Hist. du Système, t. 1, p. 160.

‡ Ibid. t. 3, p. 8.

largesse on the delighted people. Some days afterwards he addressed an exhortation, under the form of an anonymous letter, to himself, which was full of new views, and impressed with nobleness; he congratulated himself on having, by his system, encouraged production, and overturned usury; he declared that every loan of money should entitle to a share in the profits, but not to a revenue fixed and determined in advance; he adjured the creditors of the state not to refuse the reimbursement which was offered them, and invited them to place it in the shares of the company, because it was the duty of rich citizens to consecrate their capital to enterprises, by which the whole body of the nation was to profit. "To be angry, he said, at being unable to lend one's money on mortgage, is to be angry that money has become common, and that there are no more unfortunate."* He discovered also with a bold hand the depths of his system, which was, as we have already said, to replace the lender by the associate, the rent by the dividend, imposts and loans by a portion of the benefits resulting either from credit or from vast national labor confided to the direction of the state. Reaching the shocks, by which the advantages of so noble an offer were to be purchased, he pronounced those words which might be taken for an anticipated justification of the policy of the members of the convention: "It would be desirable that all the kingdom could be arranged without offending the smallest person. God alone can do it, and he does not do it, but in the order of nature."†

It was the first time that a minister exposed his designs to the public, and studied to convince them. Thus was opinion awakened, and that custom of statements which was to characterize the administrations of Turgot and Necker born; an excellent and formidable innovation which introduced the people to business, and ended by opening the revolution.

Law was however approaching the termination of his fortune. The farther he advanced on his path, the more he understood how little the monarchical system lends itself to the accomplishment of generous designs. "What hastened, says Saint Simon, the fall of the bank and the system, was the inconceivable prodigality of the Duke of Orleans, who gave with both his hands, without bounds, and even more, without distinction."‡ At the very time Law was seeking for the means to allay a crisis which threatened to be terrible, the Regent was distributing six hundred thousand livres to La Fare, a captain of the guards; an hundred thousand to Castries, a gentleman of honor to the Duchess of Orleans; two hundred thousand to the old Prince de Courtenay; a pension of sixty thousand to the little count of March, a child of only three years old, etc. etc. "Finally, so much was given, that paper failed, and the mills could not furnish enough."§ The courtiers on their side pursued Law, and loaded him with exactions, now vile, now threatening, and always insatiable. There were those of them, who, to avenge themselves for his refusal, had the baseness to go with handfuls of notes, to attack the vaults of the bank, as for example the Prince de Conti who drew out three wagon loads of specie.|| What system could have stood this odious

* Première lettre sur le nouveau système des Finances.

‡ Mémoires de Saint Simon, t. 18, p. 131.

§ Ibid. † Ibid. p. 96.

concurrence of mad prodigalities, unbridled cupidity and shameless vengeance.

It was moreover sufficient that among an excitable people, accessible to the most contrary impressions, and prompt to run to extremes, that the alarm should be once given; every thing precipitates itself at the first cry of terror. The owners of shares sought to sell them; the possessors of bank notes hastened to claim the value of them in specie. Some of those who had coin heaped it away; others, with a criminal forecast, sent it to a foreign land. A rise in the price of objects, having become general and spurring on the impatience of the realizers, the precious metals, diamonds, pearls, gold stuffs were sought after with furious desire. The creditors of the state on their side recoiled before placing their reimbursements in shares, whose depreciation was commencing. The situation of affairs was becoming daily, momentarily, more pressing; the entire mass of paper, shares and notes, was exposed to a frightful fall.

Law, taken aback, did that which the approach of a great crisis is not perhaps sufficient to justify, but which it appears to counsel. He struck strongly in order to cut out the evil by the root. He opposed the depreciation of specie to that of the notes, by ordering a diminution in the value of the coin; he prohibited the hoarding of it, under a penalty of confiscation, and for the benefit of the informers; he prohibited any one from leaving Paris and the cities which had mints without having passports, for one month; he proscribed the use of precious stones in clothing. Soon afterwards the fabrication of silver plate was interdicted, the use of notes was made obligatory in payments above an hundred livres, and finally one could not keep more than five hundred livres in specie, under penalty of confiscation.

These were certainly acts of unheard of violence; but how can they be denounced as the natural development of the system of Law, when it is clear, on the contrary, that they were used in his despair, and provoked by a crisis sprung from the manœuvres of his enemies? He himself was too clear-sighted to see any thing in such remedies, but a momentary rein on the impulse of the evil. Confidence is not decreed; credit escapes, by its own essence, from the empire of rigorous measures; he knew it, but the situation was stronger than he.

Thus, as we remarked in opening this recital, Law took as an instrument of a social revolution, that which could not be but its effect and completion. In casting paper-money into a society which was not prepared to receive it, either from its moral education, or its manners or its laws, he began where he ought to have ended.

This was his great and true error; behold its consequences. Paper-money which applied under a regime of association, could not but have realized the principle of equality in the exchanges, became, when surrendered to conflicting interests, a mischievous power whose possession was violently disputed. The effort of man towards happiness, so legitimate and so natural in an harmonious blending of wills and labors, was in a community, in which individualism ruled, but a source of hatred, jealousy and disorders.

Why then these arbitrary edicts, these blows of state? Law, by placing

cupidity at bay, only rendered it cowardly with some, furious with others. Crimes committed, blow on blow, alarmed Paris. Now it was a creditor of the state, who was assassinated immediately after having received his repayment; now a master stabbed in his bed by an old domestic. The license was such that coaches were attacked in the streets,* and every one sought to conceal his wealth, and to hide his silver. The appeal made to denunciators producing its fruits, distrust entered the bosom of families. The best friends shunned each other. A son denounced his father.†

It was necessary to cut short so many horrors. Law had recourse to measures whose wisdom is incontestable, and he would perhaps have extricated himself from the danger, if their execution had not been paralyzed by the Abbé Dubois and d'Argenson.

A decree was made on the 24th of February, 1720,‡ at the close of a solemn deliberation of the directors of the India Company, providing, among other remarkable clauses, that for the future the India Company should have the management and administration of the royal bank; that under no circumstances should the Company be compelled to make advances to the king; that no new bank notes should be issued but by virtue of decrees of the council held upon deliberations of the general affairs of the Company; and that the Company should no longer have a bureau for the purchase and sale of shares.§

Nothing can be conceived better than these regulations.|| The Company acquired by the first, an importance suitable to raise up again its credit; by the second, it opposed a barrier to ruinous exactions; by the two last combined, the emission of notes was limited so as to arrest their depreciation.

It is true that the closing of the bureau of purchase, which the Company had until then kept open, permitted the shares to fall. But in the situation in which things were, it was the bank notes which it was important to sustain, because they were in the hands of every body, and because the law had prescribed their course, and because, finally, they were placed under the guarantee of the public faith; whilst the shares, whilst spread but through a small number of hands, had no other source than speculation, whose chances it was natural they should run. This Law understood very well, and he determined to sacrifice the share to the note; the decree of the 24th of February proves it invincibly.

But the courtiers, most of whom were large shareholders, did not think with him. From thence came the fatal decree of the 5th of March, which fixed arbitrarily the value of the share at nine thousand livres, and gave the holder the right to go to the bank to exchange it for nine thousand livres in notes. Never had a more violent, more decisive blow been struck against the system. To force the bank to buy for nine thousand livres every share which it should please an owner to sell, when

* Hist. du Système, t. 3, p. 45.

† Ibid.

‡ Extracted from the records of the deliberations of the India Company.

§ Forbonnais, though an avowed adversary of Law, admits the wisdom of these regulations, t. 2, p. 613.

|| M. Eugene Daire, who is an accuser of Law, does not speak in his work of this celebrated deliberation, so necessary to justify the Scotch economist.

it was already in the path of discredit, was to render the multiplication of notes inevitable; it was consequently to weaken them, and extend the discredit, which the shares should have alone borne over the whole mass of paper. This was not only a fault, it was a crime.

But this crime has been unjustly imputed to Law. Instead of having been committed by him, it was committed against him. It is enough to compare the order of the 24th of February with that of the 5th of March, made at an interval of only ten days, to be convinced that they emanated from two entirely opposite influences.

The first closed the bureau of purchase; the second re-opened it. The first was intended to prevent the depreciation of the notes by limiting their emission; the second pushed the bank to place an enormous mass of paper in circulation. In a word, the first sacrificed the share to the note; the second, on the contrary, sacrificed the note to the share.

How can we conceive that the same man would, in less than two weeks, have wished for such contradictory results? The decree of the 25th of February saved the system by ruining many great lords; that of the 5th of March saved many great lords by destroying the system. It is then manifest that the one was the work of Law, the other that of the court.

This was, moreover, proved afterwards by the edict of June, 1725, that is, after the fall of the system; "we recognize," says this edict, "that the Company lost fourteen hundred and seventy effective millions, by operations *emanating from our movement* during our minority, and principally by the purchase and conversion of shares into bank notes, *and as it made the said operations and purchases but from obedience to our orders*, etc."*

Law might have without doubt resisted, protested, retired; he yielded from a pusillanimity which has no excuse. And he deceived himself if he thought that this culpable yielding would disarm his enemies, for this was the moment that Dubois, Le Blanc and d'Argenson selected to overthrow him. They represented to the regent that the Scotchman was a dangerous man, from the tendency of his view, and from his boldness; that he was probably amassing wealth, and passing it secretly into foreign countries; that he did not purchase land, the better to mask his game; that nothing uniting him to France, he might leave it, after having despoiled it. Unworthy calumnies! in the midst of almost universal cupidity, Law showed himself to be the most disinterested of men; he had entered with astonishing discretion into his own system, to which many of his detractors owed their wealth, and the end showed that he had placed the whole of his fortune in his adopted country, so that in quitting France, he was found not to have reserved either for himself or his family the property he had carried into the kingdom.† Let us add, that he made personal sacrifices for the establishment of his system, which show the greatness of his soul. In his justificatory memoirs, speaking of facts then known to all, he recalls, that having to people Louisiana, and being

* See Dutot, *Reflexiones Politiques sur les Finances*, t. i., p. 254.

† Letter of Law to the Duke of Bourbon, *Cœuvres de Law*, p. 399.

unwilling to lose people from the kingdom, he had brought artisans and laborers from Germany at his own expense.*

And this proves, we may say in passing, how much Law was a stranger to that barbarous system of carrying off vagabonds forcibly, against which St. Simon is so indignant;† rapes, whose scandal, moreover, only marked the decay of the system; for in the beginning "the number of persons offering to go to Louisiana was so great that the vessels of the Company were not sufficient to transport them."‡

We have proved that Law was not the author of the edict of the 5th of March; this appears very clearly from the efforts he made to destroy its effects. Law had a plan to throw thirty millions of specie into circulation for the purpose of immolating, if he could, the interest of some wealthy lords who owned the shares, for the benefit of the people who held the notes. The India Company was to have employed emissaries to draw in as many notes as possible, with a view to their total suppression; and it was to have left out the shares which could not be returned upon it.§ Thus, the last plan which Law submitted to Phillippe was, to raise the credit of the bank notes by drawing them in, and to allow the shares to fall gradually to their probable value. "But," says a cotemporary author, "the ministers of the quadruple alliance having united against the system of finances, which interfered directly with their political system, found underhand means to have a plan of M. d'Argenson's received."|| This plan was simply a declaration of bankruptcy.

The decree by which the royal bank was instituted had limited the emission of bills to the amount of an hundred millions; a year afterwards an increase to a billion was authorized; and finally, after the edict of the 5th of March, the sum of two billions six hundred millions had been surpassed in consequence of fraudulent emissions emanating from the will of the regent. We may judge into what discredit so many united causes must have thrown the notes; d'Argenson¶ proposed to make a public declaration of it, and to proclaim the gradual reduction of the share to five thousand livres, and of the notes one-half. Law protested against this unexpected proposal, that they had determined to destroy the system by crushing the people beneath its ruins. What clamor would not the holders of the bills excite when they learned that the loss of half their fortune was consummated? To state officially the fall of the paper, was doubtless not to produce it, but was it not to hasten it, and to render it mortal? Law invoked the principles of credit, reason and evidence; d'Argenson carried it, sustained as he was by Dubois, whom George the First had had elevated to the dignity of Archbishop of Cambray, and who was desirous of testifying his criminal gratitude to England. The author of *the Life of Louis Phillippe of Orleans* assures us, that Argenson, in his hatred for Law, had one day obtained by surprise an authority to have him arrested, but that when called upon to sign the order, the regent

* *Memoires Justificatifs de Law, dans ses Œuvres*, p. 410.

† *Memoires de Saint Simon*, t. 18. chap. 13. p. 182.

‡ *Memoires Justificatifs*, p. 410. § *Hist. du Système*, t. 3, p. 144. || *Ibid.* p. 146.

¶ See the *Life of Louis Phillippe of Orleans*, by M. L. J. M., not forgetting that the author is a bitter enemy of Law. See also the *Memoirs of Saint Simon*, t. 18. chap. 15, p. 211.

reconsidered it. D'Argenson found a sure mode of destroying his enemy. The edict of the 21st of May was issued, and Law, by suffering them to use his name, filled up the measure of wrongs imputable to his weakness.

Paris presented a frightful spectacle on the next day. Alarmed or furious faces were alone encountered. Complaints and imprecations resounded from every quarter. Some, unable to resist the idea of their ruin, killed themselves in despair. The good fortune of those who had escaped the public wreck, or had profited by it, appeared to add to the public grief and redoubled the excitement. At the same time, unknown persons spread about alarm by mysterious words. The following advice was circulated: "We advise you that they are about to make a Saint Bartholomew on Saturday or Sunday. Do neither you nor your domestics leave the house. God keep you from harm."* The Duke of Bourbon, the Prince of Conti, the Marshal Villerois hastened to publish that they disapproved strongly of the last edict, and that they were not at the council at which it had been adopted. The parliament was moved and met. The fatal edict must be revoked; but the blow was struck. Law was at first spared. The popular indignation broke out against d'Argenson, and the explosion was so terrible that it overthrew him. His firmness, his vast knowledge, his indefatigable activity and his services did not place him beyond the reach of disgrace. Le Blanc dared not sustain him, Dubois had abandoned him; he retired to the Faubourg St. Antoine to a convent which he had built, and of the abbess of which he was the reputed lover. His death, which happened during the following year, rewoke the hatred of the people, who troubled the funeral procession, and pursued him to his tomb.

A succession of measures tending to the entire demolition of the system; the Rue Quincampoix closed; stock-jobbing covering the Place Louis the Great with tents and exhaling there its last ardors; an outbreak, occasioned by the exchange of notes of ten livres for specie, which cost three persons their lives, whose dead bodies were carried about through the streets, and concerning which the mother of the regent wrote, "My son did nothing but laugh during this emeute;" Law flying from the public hatred at last unchained against him; the opposition of the parliament and its anger; his exile at Pontoise; the fêtes which rendered that exile ridiculous and charming; the return of magistrates obtained by corruption—these were the features which marked the end of that ravishing and tumultuous dream in which France had indulged.

The English ministers could not restrain their joy. One of them wrote to Dubois on the 15th of January, 1721, the following letter, which exposes the bearing of the system, the true causes of its fall, the manœuvres of England, and the treason of the archbishop of Cambray.

"Your excellency may well believe that we have not commenced this year, without wishing from the bottom of our heart that it may be very prosperous to you. I am eager to testify this to you, in the constant persuasion that our wishes are not indifferent to you. Lord Stanhope has made several efforts to see you personally, to congratulate you on

* Du vie de Louis Phillipe d'Orleans, par M. L. J. M.

the masterly blow with which you have finished the past year by ridding yourself of a rival equally dangerous to you and us, to concert with you the work of the new year, as well in regard to the south as the north, and the means of strengthening more and more the salutary bonds which you have formed between the two masters.*

Thus is explained the secret pension which Dubois received from the English.

Law, a witness of the abortion of his enterprise, abandoned by his egotistical protector, threatened by the approaching return of parliament, discouraged, had obtained a passport in December, 1720. As he had placed all his fortune in France, and it was confiscated, he left that kingdom poor, which he had entered rich, and in which he had had the means of amassing immense treasures. He left it in a borrowed carriage, having but eight hundred louis, and leaving behind him a numerous crowd of cowards and ingrates ready to tear him to pieces. At Brussels, whither he first went, an envoy from the Czar Peter pressed him to go and assume the government of the finances of the Russian empire.† But the injustice of his enemies had chilled his courage and crushed his heart for ever. After having wandered for sometime through Europe, he retired to Venice. He was visited there by Montesquieu, who was struck by the boldness of the plans to which his indomitable mind yet gave birth. His look was turned unceasingly towards France, and he wrote to the Prince who governed it: "Remember that it is for the sovereign to give credit, not receive it." He died in abandonment, almost in misery, and left a calumniated memory as his only inheritance.

The system of this illustrious and unfortunate man, enervated and perverted as it was, did not produce the effects foreseen by his genius; but it is easy to judge now how profound, how irreparable was the blow it inflicted on old customs and manners; and in that at least it served powerfully the cause of the revolution.

This revolution, become inevitable, was however advancing under a thousand different aspects, by a thousand marked or obscure routes, and with an invincible force. It has been said that a mortal wind was raised during the regency which struck with its breath nobles, priests, kings, all that had yet been honored or dreaded among men.

Thus whilst the gentry were debasing themselves by the grossest cupidity, the lawyers, in a vain debate about precedency, were handing over dukes and peers to the ridicule of the multitude, and the parliament was laying bare with a bold hand, the origin of patrician families. In the memorial of the parliament we read, "That the nobility of the proudest lords of the court was of an equivocal nature or recent date; that the dukes of Uzès were descended from Gérault Bastet, who was ennobled in 1304, and was the son of Jean Bastet, an apothecary of Viviers; that the Neuville Villeroi sprung from a fish merchant, who was the superintendent of the table to Francis the First; that the numerous posterity of La Rochefoucauld, Roussi, etc., drew its origin from a stall butcher named Georges Vert; that the genealogy of the

* Correspondance inédite de Dubois, t. 2. p. 2.

† Lemonney, t. 6. chap. 10. p. 342.

dukes of Richelieu commenced with René Vignerot, a domestic and lute player in the house of Cardinal Richelieu, whose sister he seduced and married; that the true name of the Luynes was Albert, the name of an advocate of Moras, who had three sons, Luynes, Brantes and Cadenet, and all so poor, that they only owned a single cloak, which they were obliged to use by turns.*

"The Greeks and Romans," added the memorial, "gave the preference to the robe over the sword, because force is but the prop of justice, and should only be regarded in the proportion it is used to maintain it. The republics of Venice, Holland and Genoa conducted themselves on the same principles, and those gentlemen, who, in the management of their smallest affairs, prostrate themselves before those who wear the robe, glory in despising it."

Could the nobility long preserve its prestige in the minds of the people, when the first magistrates inflicted such blows upon it?

The church, on its side, showed but unworthy prelates at its head. Some, like Bissy and Tencin, compromised themselves by their intrigues; others, like Tressan, by an unheard of mixture of skepticism and intolerance; many by a cynical display of corruption. Among the ostentatious libertines was the Cardinal de Rohan, who lived to pride himself on his beauty, to give splendid entertainments, and to please the women, and who used baths of milk to freshen his skin. The archbishop of Arles acquired a scandalous celebrity by his amours with Mesdames d'Arlagues and Perrin de Gravaison, nuns of the Abbey of Saint Césaire. Accompanied by the Abbé de Bussey, his companion in debauchery, he passed a part of the day in the convent, and when night came, the nuns, whom he had seduced, left it by a rear door, and did not return to it until the next morning.† The Abbé Dorsanne relates‡ that a courtesan of Aix having been condemned to be hung, exclaimed, as they were leading her to execution: "Is it possible, that a woman who has had the honor to be *known* by the archbishop of Arles and the Abbé Bassy, can be hung?" Richelieu might say, when speaking of the Abbé d'Auvergne, appointed bishop of Tours by the regent, without astonishing any one, "He ought never to have been bishop but of one city, which should have been resuscitated for him, and that is Sodom."§ And by whom was the majesty of the Holy See represented? By the Nuncio Bentivoglio, an old, licentious, brutal soldier and the avowed lover of an opera girl. He had a child who appeared at the theatre by the name of Duval, and whom the public called *Constitution* on account of the bull *Unigenitus*.

But Dubois effaced every thing by the hideous lustre of his disorders and appeared to monopolize the public contempt. The turpitudes described by Suetonius in *the life of the twelve Cæsars*, were unequalled by the *fetes of the flagellants* of which Dubois was the founder, and such was his reputation that he was only designated among the people by the infamous qualification attached to purveyors of the most vulgar debauch-

* *Memoire pour le parlement contre les dues et pains presented to Monseigneur the Duke of Orleans, Regent.*

† *Journal de l'Abbé Dorsanne*, t. 3. p. 89.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 88.

§ *Ibid.* p. 198.

eries. He wished however to be Archbishop of Cambray, and he was. It was necessary, however, that two bishops should consent to testify to the purity of his morals; these two bishops were De Tressan and Massillon. See what we read on this subject in the journal of the Abbé d'Orsanne.*

"No one was surprised that the Bishop of Nantes, who had already judged this abbé worthy of the priesthood and had laid his hands upon him, should lend himself to such a testimony; but all good people were afflicted on seeing Massillon, the Bishop of Clermont, thus prostitute himself. Every one recalled to himself the truths he had so frequently preached in Paris, and against which he agitated so publicly. We cannot tell what impression this conduct made upon men of the world, who thought themselves right in their conclusions, that the most celebrated preachers, even the bishops, regarded the truths of religion as a sport."

But Dubois was to add another scandal still more striking and disgraceful to this first one. He was consecrated on the 9th of June, 1720, in the Val de Grace, with a pomp worthy of a pope. He had as his assistants De Tressan and Massillon, the same who had answered before God and man for the holiness of his life. Princes, lords of the court, a number of foreign ambassadors assisted at the ceremony. Phillippe, from some remains of shame, had determined to absent himself, but this resolution was conquered by Madame de Parabère, the accomplice of Dubois, in the intoxication of a night of pleasure.

The consecration of the Archbishop of Cambray had scarcely taken place when a strange rumor was spread about, and it acquired so much consistency as to be stated in an official despatch from the Prussian minister.†

"A woman of a very low extraction, and originally from Hainault, being reduced to the greatest distress, declared that she was married to the Abbé Dubois and had several children by him. As a little more generosity on the part of the minister might have closed the mouth of this creature, one does not know how he lost his little judgment, so as not to perceive the prostitution which this discovery draws upon him. There are moreover many persons who accuse him of such infamous habits, that in their eyes, it is doing him too much honor to suppose that he has a taste for women. The accident which has happened to him shows that he is a man to do every thing, and that no sin embarrasses him."

If the vices of Dubois dishonored but himself, history should certainly not be at the pains to stop over them, but it was reserved for him to give an historical importance to his immorality, by the skill with which he communicated its opprobrium to the principal cabinets of Europe and the whole church. He did not want genius, it was only a soul, and he was at least profound in his baseness. Tormented with a desire of equaling Mazarin and Richelieu in power, he gave a wing to his ambition which astonishes us in one so depraved. What he dared to conceive was, to obtain the hat of a cardinal, to render by that means the Holy See and the priesthood bound up with his unworthiness, and to take catholicism as

* Journal de l'Abbé d'Orsanne, t. 3, p. 226.

† Despatch of the Prussian minister, Sallentin, August 9th, 1720.

it were for bail. The degradation of the clergy at this period was such that the pretension did not appear to be either mad or insolent. It is true that Dubois had the assistance of England, and it is one of the features of English policy to elevate, while despising, those who serve it.

Dubois could then count upon success; but the manœuvres which he used will remain an everlasting monument of the corruption which then prevailed in the venal Rome of the pontiffs. To obtain a just idea of it, we must go back to the diplomatic correspondence of the Archbishop of Cambray; we must read the letters in which, in the candor of intimate outpourings, he traffics with his own conscience and that of the pope. "I do not repeat to you," he said, in a confidential despatch to the Jesuit Lafiteau, whom he had made Bishop of Sisteron, and who was his agent in the intrigues of the Vatican, "I do not repeat to you, what it would be my glory and pleasure to do, not only for his holiness, but also for Cardinal Albani; attentions, offices, bounties, prints, books, trinkets, all kinds of presents; every day will see something new and unforeseen in order to please."*

Knowing the taste of Clement the Eleventh for rich bindings, he said in another letter, "I have before me the catalogue of books which you thought might be agreeable to his holiness. . . . I beseech you to apply yourself to discover what I can do, and send weekly and by all the couriers who shall be despatched from Rome, to mark my respectful attention for whatever may please his holiness. Learn from those around him, what small French works he may choose for his daily use; what bindings of books please him most, and if there are plates in France, England and Holland, which may divert him."†

Pecquet, the chief clerk in the office of foreign affairs, wrote to the Bishop of Sisteron, by the order of Dubois:—

"You have forwarded the matter so well, that you must aid us until it is consummated. I am ignorant, my lord, what hopes you have held out in the last place to Cardinal Albani; but that you may say something positive, our Mæcenæ permits you to promise and will place you in a condition to give, on the day in which the pope shall consummate this grace, twenty thousand Roman crowns to Cardinal Albani, and ten thousand more as soon as the exchanges shall be less onerous; or if the Cardinal Albani prefers it, our Mæcenæ will engage to place, without any delay, after his promotion, twenty thousand livres in specie, in the hands of any one in Paris whom he shall designate. . . . You may judge well that that will not be the only nor most essential fruit of gratitude."

Dubois knowing that the court of Rome found the obligation of pensioning the pretender very onerous, promised secretly to substitute himself for the Roman pontiff in the acquittance of this charge, which was no less than twelve thousand Roman crowns a year. He thus betrayed George the First his chief protector, but there was no blackness of which his vile ambition was not capable.

Still happy France, if it had only cost it its gold dissipated in de-

* Correspondance inédite de Dubois, t. 1, p. 341.

† Ibid., p. 394.

grading prodigalities to crown the hopes of the favorite of Phillip. But artificial in his cupidity, Clement the Eleventh thought only of selling at the highest price what the Archbishop of Cambray was so desirous of purchasing. He studied then to excite the passion of his solicitor, inflaming it daily more and more by calculated delays and assurances full of falsehood. Rare books, pictures, precious bindings, money, the pope took all, promised the coveted hat unceasingly and never gave it. He soon demanded that France should be placed beneath his feet, he was very sure of being obeyed. From thence arose the efforts of Dubois to change the favor which the regent had at first granted to the Jansenists into persecution; from thence the manœuvres to declare the bull *Unigenitus* a law of the state, which was to produce a half century of hatreds and heart-rendings.

What can we add to a picture of such ignominies? Dubois learned that the Bishop of Sisteron was using a part of the money he sent him to buy up pope and cardinals, in paying mistresses and leading a life of pleasure. We read in a letter of the Archbishop of Cambray:—"In following the road which the Bishop of Sisteron has marked out for me to see the watches and diamonds, I have found some turns very obscure and others very plain." For such a man as Dubois, his agent in that proved his genius. Thus he was careful not to recall him; he required to be served by great vices; only to start the negotiation afresh, he joined the Cardinal de Rohan and the Abbé Tencin to Lafliteau. In the midst of it, Clement the Eleventh died. The intrigue then took a new turn, and it was determined to labor to make him pope who would agree to make Dubois a cardinal. To decorate with the Roman purple the man whom the regent was accustomed to call *my droll*, became the great affair of christendom. Let us abridge these hideous details. Gold was poured out profusely. According to the expression of Dubois himself, "they made an acquisition of the whole Albani family as you purchase porcelain." The Bishop of Sisteron gained over a courtesan named Mannacia, who exercised a voluptuous and irresistible empire about the Vatican, for a thousand crowns.* Conti finally was not chosen pope, until after he had entered into a written engagement to give him the hat, and in the month of May, 1723, a general assembly of the French clergy having taken place, Dubois was unanimously chosen president. So well did he know how to envelop the whole church in his dishonor.

It remained to deprive the royal power of its last prestiges; this the regent did by an excessive and audacious dissoluteness of morals.

According to the testimony of Charlotte de Bavière, his mother, he had given proofs of virility at thirteen years of age, and the thirst for violent pleasures never left him more. There was nothing besides from nature to ennoble or distract this fury of the senses in him, his heart having been early and forever closed to the poetry of love. Wit, grace, beauty, the seductions of modesty, the mysterious enchantments of tenderness were not what he required from women; he wished them on the

contrary to be intoxicated, passionate, furious and almost disfigured by the habit of obscene desires. He was pleased with the noise, the tumult of his orgies, so as to compromise the royal authority which was represented in his person. Louis the Fourteenth had known how to be a king even in his amours. His pride exacted that all below him should respect the reins he broke. He held the court prostrate at the feet of his bastards, he gave it the sight of his adulteries to admire, and yet he had prescribed to it to be decent and reserved, as if to show that every thing, even scandal, entered into the privileges of the master. But the regent was not the man to calculate his vices. Loving them for themselves, he abandoned himself to them without any secret thought, with thoughtlessness, laughing, and was pleased that all should follow his example. He thus allowed obscene servants to drag the remains of his soiled power into their gross feasts, and placed his dignity at the mercy of subalterns, become his equals through debauchery. Sometimes it was a dancer whom in full opera he carried into his box and undressed.* Such scenes took place, and such dangers were encountered during certain hours of the night in a reserved part of the Palais-Royal, that the frequenters of it gave themselves a superintendent, a dictator, a master, in the person of Canilhac, the only one among them who was invincible to drunkenness. These things were known to the public; the regent took no pains to hide them, and he even piqued himself on having established an island of Capri in the midst of Paris.

We doubt if he corrupted his own daughters, and it is his decree which causes the doubt. Soulavie accuses him in express terms of having been the lover of the Duchess de Berri, Mademoiselle de Valois and the Abbess of Chelles; and he adds, "I have the original and testimonial proofs in the letters of Mademoiselle de Valois, which are in my power."† It is certain, that in his own time he was judged capable of it. He was said to idolize the handsome hands of the Duchess de Berri; it is related, that in a jealous struggle, the princess having thrown herself between her lover and her father, she had received from the latter, as Poppea formerly did from Nero, a kick in the stomach.‡ It is affirmed that Mademoiselle Valois only obtained the enlargement of the Duke de Richelieu, who was a prisoner in the Bastille, at the price of incest, and that the Abbess of Chelles was not treated otherwise.§ Horrible accusations which we must believe false, but which were none the less circulated, because frenzied conduct gave them a resemblance to truth, and which propagated in the shape of pamphlets by the blind man of the Gate Saint Roch, the crier of indulgences, taught the people to despise the powers of the earth.

Let us add that the public life of the regent ended by engulfing and losing him in the disorders of his private life. He abandoned himself to opera girls, and the decision on the most important affairs was made on coming from their embraces. The fury of pleasures soon taking entire

* *Mélanges historiques de Boisjournain*, t. 1. p. 229.

† *Decadence de la Monarchie*, t. 2. p. 77.

‡ *Hist. du Système*, t. 1. p. 8.

§ From this the famous couplet attributed to Voltaire, *Enfin votre esprit est guéri.*

possession of him; he cast the ennui of commanding men on Dubois. He himself set the example of obeying this wretch, only reserving to himself the right of insulting him. Political effeminacy finally increased whatever was baneful to the royal authority in such abasement; for painful as may be the avowal, terror gave place to contempt in the minds of the people. Tiberius rendered himself so terrible to the Romans, he so occupied their attention with his baneful power, that they felt only the sentiment of hatred towards him, which is less to be dreaded than disdain. His infamies were not pitied, because they induced fear. The debaucheries of the regent on the contrary, having nothing bloody about them, their vile side was the better remarked. He himself dreamed only of enjoying the easy delights of unlimited power, and did not ask if he were not contributing to the destruction of the monarchy by so doing. It is due to Cardinal Dubois to say that he did not share the entire carelessness of his master, for in the midst of his follies and buffooneries, he had always preserved a kind of serious perversity, and it has been said of him, that his intellect was on the watch in the darkness of his heart. Elevated to the rank of first minister, he sought to escape from the feeling of his baseness by the loftiness of his plans; he attempted a reform in the administration; he affected the high tone towards parliament which Richelieu had taken with the nobility; he introduced equality into the taxes. But the path could not be again remounted; and besides, excesses in libertinage had interdicted those of ambition to Dubois. He died in pain, laden with honors, gorged with power, dissatisfied, cursing men, blaspheming God, because he died despising himself.

His master did not long survive him. Endowed with brilliant qualities, whose treasure he dissipated shamefully, the regent fell into an incurable languor. Powerless for happiness, he became so for pleasure also, which is the dream of it. With his eyes half closed, his head weighing down, a prey to a sharp, inextinguishable thirst for voluptuousness, whose ardor a bitter disgust poisoned without calming, could he bear the cares of royalty? He no longer felt strength enough to live. He was surprised sighing for the last repose, that of the tomb; and there remained nothing else for him to wish for, when an attack of apoplexy cast him dead upon the knees of his affrighted mistress.

If we now take in at a single glance the facts which our history has traced, it will be found that the regency marks a truly new era in our history; that the system of Law, by introducing a passion for business and commercial manners among us, pushed France on to the regime of burgher rule; that the system of Dubois stripped this of all the grandeur it possessed, by precipitating us into an alliance of which the empire of the sea was the price; that, finally, under the regency burgherism was elevated by the deterioration of the nobles, the clergy, the throne, that is of every thing which did not belong to it.

And what became of the people during this time? They had not ceased to suffer, bent beneath their old burthen. But its grief did not fill the measure and did not explode but during the ministry of the duke. What say the edicts of that period, for it is in the edicts that we must seek for the past of the poor when we only find them in history by

the trace of their blood shed on battle fields or the pavement of revolted cities. Yes, whilst on the lawn of Chantilly the ladies of the court, in the dresses of shepherdesses, displayed their charms in graceful ballets; whilst the duke, intoxicated with love, was exhausting the treasures of the state and the magic of feasts for the charming Marchioness de Prie, the announcement of a famine agitated the sad army of mendicants in Paris; the consternation spread far and near through the country, and the roads were covered with pale vagabonds. Then broke forth the scourge of speculation based upon the public distress; then began the monopolizings. A worthy brother of that Count of Charolais who preceded M. de Sade in the art of imbruing debauchery with blood, and of whom it is related, that he fired on tilers for the pleasure of seeing them fall from the top of the roof, the duke was ferocious in his cupidity.* He was not ashamed, according to the testimony of Saint Simon,† to become one of the jobbers who practised the science of starving the people to enrich themselves. Thus bread was not long in rising in Paris to three sous the pound, and proportionately in the provinces.‡ “In Normandy they lived on the herbs of the fields,” wrote the indignant Saint Simon to Fleury.§ “I speak in secret and in confidence to a Frenchman, a bishop, a minister, and the only man who appears to share the friendship and confidence of the king, and who speaks to him in private, of a king who is not such although he has a kingdom and subjects, and who is of an age to be able to perceive the consequences of it, and who instead of being the first king in Europe, cannot be a great king if he is one but of beggars of all conditions, and if his kingdom is turned into a vast hospital of dying and desperate persons.”

Savage edicts appeared. To defend the property which extreme misery threatened, the keeper of the seals d’Armenonville pronounced the most terrible of all penalties, death without restriction, distinction or reservation as the punishment for domestic robbery.|| The number of the famished becoming rapidly more numerous, it was determined to crowd them, groaning and rebelling, into prisons adorned with the name of hospitals, and in which, by order of the Comptroller General Dodun, those arriving were laid stretched out on the straw, “so as to occupy the least space.”¶ It was a crime to fly from this sinister hospitality. But how were the culprits to be recognized? “They determined,” says Lemontey,** “to impress an indelible mark on the beggars, and some were handed over to the chemists, who tried different caustics on them.” Experience not succeeding, it was determined they should be marked on the arm by fire. It only remained to make a war of extermination on them. But most of the archers were moved with pity at the sight of the unfortunates, after whom they were sent in pursuit, and a novelty occurred in the annals of tyranny, that where victims could be struck down with impunity, there were no executioners.

Thus were amassed in the bosom of the people the resentment and

* Lacretelle, t. 2. p. 59.

† Saint Simon, chap. 7. p. 106.

‡ *Memoires Secrets de Duclos*, t. 2. p. 209.

§ Letter to the Bishop of Fregus, July 25, 1725.

|| Declaration of the 4th of March, 1724.

¶ Instruction to the Intendants, July, 1724. ** T. 2. des *Œuvres*, p. 136.

anger which burgherism was one day to use so powerfully in its last contest. And yet how far was burgherism from comprehending the holiness and the duties of that natural chain, which, in the face of old oppressions, bound all the oppressed. Absorbed in an egotism, whose long imprudence will engender so many disasters, what they saw in the people was, less the means of sufferings to cure, than of passions to direct against the common enemy. We must not be astonished then, if afterwards, after many services paid with ingratitude and a thousand deceitful excitements, it turned out that the angry dogs turned against the hunters. Let us meditate on the following page of the ministry of the duke.

The disorder in the finances being frightful, Duverney had carried the brutality of his character into means for surmounting them. To reduce the legal value of the coin one half, to impose an arbitrary limit on the price of merchandize, to close the shops of all who should disobey the despotism of the regulations, to let loose the soldiers against the workman who was discontented with his wages, was but sport for the counsellor of Madame La Prie. Useless violences! the evil grew worse, the people had no longer anything but their blood to give. Paris Duverney then conceived the idea of levying a tax which he fixed at the fiftieth part of the revenue, and to which he subjected all classes of the citizens without exception. In other words, the proceedings of tyranny being found sterile, he had recourse to the only expedient which he had not yet employed, justice.

But immediately what a storm! what a tempest! Protests full of gall and furious clamors were heard from the clergy. What? to dare to lay hands on the wealth of the church. To attack immunities which not only the devotion of Saint Louis, but the absolute will of Louis the Fourteenth had respected. The clergy were willing to have condemned themselves to the charge of a gratuitous gift; in exacting more, religion was outraged, God offended,—such was the language of the high clergy. Now at this period, the church, including in it the beneficed monks, owned nine thousand chateaux, two hundred and fifty-nine thousand farms, an hundred and seventy-three thousand acres of vines, fourteen hundred out of seventeen hundred ploughs in the Cambresis; more than half the property situated in Franche Comte,* and its annual revenues were not valued at less than twelve hundred and twenty millions.† These ministers of a God of charity, of a God who was born in a stable, united however to cast a burthen upon the poor which crushed them, and after tumultuous sittings they separated, declaring they would not subscribe to the desires of the king.

The opposition was neither less hateful nor less culpable on the part of the nobility, but what is most worthy of remark is, that the most lively and animated opposition came from the body which represented burgherism politically. A bed of justice having been convened, parliament assembled in the midst of extraordinary agitation. The faces were sombre, each composing his countenance and feigning to regard

* Preamble to the ordinance of May 17th, 1731.

† Letter from the Cardinal Fleury to the Council of Louis the Fifteenth.

the establishment of a new tax as the loss of the kingdom. Forced by the nature of his duties to support the registry, the Advocate General Gilbert affirmed that his words cost him as much as the sacrifice of his life, and the keeper of the seals putting the question, they replied to him by an unanimous refusal to deliberate. The parliaments of the provinces inveighed in their turn. That of Brittany maintained, that its contract of union authorized it to refuse; that of Languedoc, that the hail did not permit the payment of the proposed tax; that of Toulouse, that it was to violate sacred privileges and confound clergy and nobility with the people.

The famine, however, kept up by the speculators, did not cease its ravages. Sedition was growing in Paris. The shrine of Sainte Genevieve carried through the streets, had but added to the disturbances in the minds of men. The gate of Saint Antoine was closed against the gambling population of the suburbs. The ministry of the duke could not make head against such an opposition, which the intrigues of the court helped; it was overthrown and the people obtained no other satisfaction than the impost of the *fiftieth*.

"We will that ecclesiastical property remain exempt, and we declare it exempt forever from all other taxes, impositions and levies." The author of this declaration was Cardinal Fleury, the same to whom Saint Simon had written, a year before, that in Normandy they were living on the herbs of the field, and that the kingdom "was turning into a vast hospital of dying and desperate." Could the revolution, alas! be any thing else, than a war, a war to the death?

BOOK THIRD.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

THE PRINCIPLE OF INDIVIDUALISM IS ADOPTED BY BURGHERISM.

We are now on the threshold of that burning laboratory in which the materials of the French Revolution were united and prepared in a definite manner; we are about to enter upon a world agitated by the philosophers.

What a sight! The papacy sees a thousand enemies full of eloquence and ardor born from the ashes of Luther to overwhelm it. Two words, which Europe is astonished and delighted to hear, resound—tolerance, reason. Fanaticism is covered with opprobrium, with the recollection of the anguish for which it gave the signal, of the funeral piles it erected. Old superstitions are handed over to the attacks of immortal ridicule. Learned men interrogate the heavens, measure mountains, dig into the bowels of the earth, and demand from the globe the secret of its age, in order to give the lie to the book of Genesis, and convince the books of the priests of error and imposture. Where will this formidable power—free examination—stop? Some denied Christ, careless of the great void which was thereby to be made in history. Others doubted the soul of man. Others discussed God, the soul of the Universe. The doctrine of sensation and the theory of annihilation were opposed to those invincible aspirations which have the Infinite for their object, to those desires which transport us to times which are not ours, to that insatiable avidity of existence, the charm and torment of our troubled hearts. Thus man found himself lowered, even to being but an accident in creation; he was stripped of all that eternal duration is worth. But at the same time, and by a strange contradiction, how they endeavored to elevate, how they exalted this particle of organized matter which was so soon to pass away. Never had the demonstration of the littleness of man been more pitilessly pursued, and never had his greatness been more resolutely affirmed. They demanded that his dignity should be recognized, his security guaranteed; they wished inviolable conscience and free thought to be granted him. What was not less singular, these apostles of cold examination carried, in those times, the enthusiasm and the passion of sectaries into their

worship of thought. Prodigious labors to be undertaken, a thousand dangers to be encountered, tyranny to seduce or brave, the moral education of generations to remodel, the human conscience to fill with uncertainty and alarm, nothing arrested them, nothing made them hesitate, because, after all, they themselves had also a belief; they believed in reason. Such was then the work of this century. And all labored in it; writers, artists, great lords, magistrates, ministers, even sovereigns. There was a moment in which the new spirit was the master of society, from its base to its top, having penetrated the court of Prussia through Frederick, that of Austria through Joseph the Second, that of France through Turgot, that of Russia through Catherine, into the Vatican through Clement the Fourteenth. So that philosophy glided even among kings; it enveloped them; it dictated words of strange meaning to them; it urged them on, intoxicated with praise, to the destruction of those altars which thrones had so long had for a support. But the time was to come when kings recoiled with alarm from before their work. . . . When the last veils were finally to drop, when passing from religion to politics, and from politics to property, the spirit of examination had raised so many questions to which, alas! there was no reply but at the price of tempests; why were there masters and slaves, and whole generations ground down during the transition of a single person? Why were there kings and nobles? Why classes which were born happy, and beneath them an innumerable crowd of groaning, famishing, despairing beings? Why this long encroachment by a few, on the earth, the residence of mankind, and its indivisible domain? "The first who having inclosed a piece of ground, chose to say this is mine, and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. What armies, wars and murders; what miseries and horrors would not have been spared the human race, if tearing down his stakes or filling up his ditch, his fellows had cried out, be careful how you listen to this impostor; you are lost if you forget that its fruits belong to all, and the earth to no one."

The movement about to be indicated, when contemplated from a little distance, presents at first but tumult and confusion. Even the philosophers of the eighteenth century, who appear to be united by the closest bond, had nothing in common but the desire to strike, each striking after his own fashion, under the inspiration of his private hatreds, with the arms which belonged to him; this one as a deist, that as an atheist, and a third as a disciple of Spinoza. We shall hereafter find these divisions of thought living, and when the Epicurean philosophy of Danton, the atheism of Anacharsis Clootz, the deism of Robespierre shall pass before us transformed into terrible passions, it will become manifest that the reality did not germinate from an abstraction; that metaphysical debates, apparently so vague in their objects, had an unequalled practical importance in their results, and that frequently this brutal force, which was believed to be only unchained by personal passions or gross interests, had reference to labors full of evil, to the disquietude or the vengeance of thought. The difference among the philosophers did not refer also only to questions of this kind; it reached every thing. Thus men who had anathematized priests together, separated, astonished, when the

anathema of kings was the object. He who had shaken the foundations of Catholicism with a confident hand, was penetrated with secret terror, when urged to enter upon a war against God. If burgerism had its leaders, the people had their enlighteners. By the side of philosophers, rocked in pride and joy, the friends of princes, frondeurs, smiling over the ruins they were about to make, there were philosophers sick of their doubts, there were religious thinkers and fierce dreamers, there were melancholy tribunes.

How, then, can we trace distinctly the march of ideas in such a pell-mell? Nothing is more difficult at first sight, and yet when we look closer, we shall find in the eighteenth century two great currents of ideas moving in parallel lines, and both leading to the gulf of the Revolution.

We have seen how profound the distinction between burgerism and the people has always been, though always marked by common interests and common hatreds. This distinction in the order of facts is reproduced in the eighteenth century in the world of thought.

Thus were there two doctrines, not only different, but opposed; the one having an association of equals for its end, and partaking of the principle of fraternity; the second founded entirely on individual right.

The first, sprung directly from the gospel, wished for the realization of liberty by union and love; the second, the daughter of protestantism, sought it only in the emancipation of the individual.

Morelly, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Mably, and in some respects Necker, belonged to the first; the second had as its representatives Voltaire, Diderot, Helvetius, Turgot, Morellet, etc.

The first was to lead to Robespierre; the second created Mirabeau.

The latter ruled in the constituent assembly; half stifled, under the convention, it reappeared on the day following the 9th Thermidor; it overthrew the empire, after having submitted to it; it called itself liberalism during the Restoration; it reigns now. We will show through what singular dramas, by what struggles, what ruins and what tragic efforts, it opened for itself a path to the government of society during that eighteenth century so imposing and so stormy.

It is not surprising that at the point which burgerism reached, it adopted the doctrine of individual right, and stopped there.

Unity had not, in fact, existed until that time, except in religion, by the intolerance of Catholicism; in politics, by absolute royalty or feudal tyranny; in the pursuits of industry, by monopoly.

To break this unity of oppression in its triple form, and free the individual from all kinds of shackles, became then the ruling passion of burgerism.

It had, moreover, wealth and strength. Fortified by instruments of labor of which the common mass were destitute; endowed with an activity and information which the nobles in general wanted, burgerism possessed all the means of development which dispense with the necessity of association and cause the trammels of the hierarchy to be dreaded. Individualism sufficed for it. It demanded, consequently, freedom of mind against the church, political freedom against kings, freedom of industry against monopolizers; and it asked for nothing else.

But liberty without equality, which is the lien of interests, and fraternity, which is the lien of hearts, is but an hypocritical despotism. And now see how burgherism was to give us, sooner or later, a profound moral anarchy for liberty of the mind; an oligarchy of copy holders for political liberty; the competition of rich and poor for the advantage of the rich, for freedom of industry.

Be that as it may, the writers of burgherism in the eighteenth century were divided into three schools, corresponding with the three kinds of tyranny then to be destroyed. There was the school of the philosophers, properly so called, whose leader was Voltaire; that of the politicians, which Montesquieu founded, and that of the economists which is represented by Turgot. To expose what was the part of each of these three famous schools in the common work, by developing on a parallel line the rival doctrines of Jean-Jacques, Mably and Necker, is to give the history of the revolution as it passed through the heads of these thinkers in the eighteenth century.

CHAPTER I.

WAR ON THE CHURCH—TRIUMPH OF INDIVIDUALISM IN PHILOSOPHY, OR
RATIONALISM.

VOLTAIRE.

Voltaire before the people, before kings, before priests—The Jansenists become subject to convulsions, and the Jesuits intolerant; Sacrileges and Scandals—Voltaire opens the attack—Pascal and Descartes importune him—He brings the doctrine of Sensations with him from England, which is favorable to individualism—The Statue of Condillac—Diderot—What represents the notion of a God in politics—Association of Diderot and d'Alembert—The *Encyclopedia*—Dinners of the Baron Holbach—School of Rationalism—Freret, Boulanger, etc.—Immense intellectual anarchy—Buffon—Theory of J. by Helvetius—The misanthropy of Molière in the eighteenth century—Jean-Jacques Rousseau; his struggle against the philosophers of individualism—The opposite school succeeds—Thinking Europe is conquered by Voltaire—Frederick a philosopher—Frederick alarmed by the *System of Nature*—Fall of the Jesuits—The Jansenists attacked in their turn—Glorious and universal apostleship of tolerance—Triumph of Rationalism.

THE Reformation, as we have shown, had well introduced the principle of individualism to the world; but Luther and Calvin had failed in logic and audacity. They had invoked the sovereignty of reason only against Rome, not against the scriptures. They would have paled with alarm, at the very idea of discussing, in a purely rational manner, God, the existence of the soul, the infinite, eternity. No one, in their opinion, had a right to dive into questions which they thought resolved by the holy books, interpreted by means of the light of faith. They had left a part of his chains on the individual, whilst declaring him enfranchised; and the human mind having reached certain heights in his flight, was immediately to close its wings.

The continuers, whom the eighteenth century gave to Luther, pushed the work commenced to its furthest limits. After having given the entire domain of religion to free examination, they abandoned that of metaphysics to it. What Luther had dared against the fathers of the church, they dared against Luther prostrated before the gospel.

They proposed immensity itself for the flight of the mind. This exalted respect for the liberty of the mind commanded tolerance from them. Thus they had none of that despotic humor and inconsistent cruelty by which we have seen the reign of Calvin so odiously soiled. They themselves were humane, and the apostleship of tolerance found them indefatigable. Their glory is in that. As for their worship of reason, as reason divides as often as faith reunites, they could but place man upon a heap of ruins, on the top of which we still perceive him, erect and master of himself, but restless and alone.

Whether we congratulate or deplore it, such a moral revolution had an incomparable bearing. There were required at the head of the

movement which produced it, thinkers of a rare suppleness of intellect, that the seduction might become universal; ardent defenders of mankind, that every generous soul might salute their triumph in advance; writers of prodigious opulence, that their good offices might create clients for them; invincible railers, before whom they should tremble; leaders of a party, at once resolute and prudent, that there might be neither a stop nor a false movement in the attack; there were needed historians, poets, metaphysicians, writers of tales, dramatic authors, novelists, publicists, admitted in consequence of their genius and glory to familiarity with kings; finally, and that the people so long oppressed might have the consolation of being avenged on their tyrants, by their tyrants themselves, there were perhaps needed philosophers fearing Anitus and hemlock, crafty to excess, insinuating, as skilful to put persecution to sleep as prompt to decry it, capable of hypocrisy, skilful in seducing nobles and flattering princes. In the eighteenth century all these men formed but one, and their name was Voltaire.

Voltaire! Are we permitted to lay an hand upon this great idol? Can an heir of the eighteenth century do it without temerity? For it is Voltaire who has marked out the path, be it good or evil, in which the living generations are walking; and he was such, that either from love or hatred, the whole world was engaged in the interests of his glory. What a destiny! To be for sixty years the whole mind of Europe, to be the history of an age; to write, and by it to reign; to render princes either proud of having learned to think, or ashamed of being only powerful; from the depths of a studious and enchanting retreat, to hold the people breathless, to render their rulers anxious, to push on an illustrious crowd towards an end designated in advance; to note the persecution of infamy to alarm it; to proclaim tolerance; to combat and conquer for humanity; in an unequalled conspiracy, to give himself all priests as enemies, all kings as accomplices; to break down whilst smiling what Luther had only shaken by prodigious bursts of wrath, and to live happy. No matter, I see but weakness and cowardice in being silent about names that are adored lest we should weaken or soil them. When a man is mounted upon the heights of history, it is for him to raise his heart to the level of his destiny. Truly great men have no need for all those reticences, a respect for which insults them. Let them show themselves as nature made them, their action on humanity will lose nothing by it having had the character of things which last. Why should we not say then of Voltaire, that he aided progress powerfully, by overthrowing the old form of oppression and thus advancing the hour of universal deliverance; but that by his opinions, his instincts, his direct ends, he was the man of burgherism and of burgherism only. If it is just to glorify him for having overthrown with so much splendor the tyranny that was exercised by means of authority, it is equally so to blame him for having contributed to establish the tyranny which is exercised by means of individualism. After all, the care of his memory touches us less than the fate of the people whom he might have better served. His genius deserves that he should be saluted, but we must be suffered to judge him. There is nothing inviolable in the world, but justice and truth.

No, Voltaire did not love the people enough. Could the weight of the misery of so many unfortunate laborers have been alleviated, Voltaire would doubtless have applauded from a feeling of humanity; but his pity would have had nothing active, nothing arising from a democratic sentiment, about it; it was the pity of a great lord, mixed with haughtiness and contempt. Open his correspondence, the aristocracy of his disdain shines out in every page of it. "I have never pretended to enlighten shoemakers and servant-maids."*

"It seems to me that this Other is much despised by all thinking people. Their number is small, I admit, but it will always be respectable. It is the small number which makes the public; the rest are the vulgar. Work then for that small public, without exposing yourself to the madness of the great number."†

"I commend *the wretch* (superstition) to you. We must destroy it among decent people and leave it to the mob."‡

"Those who write against what is called luxury, are only poor men in an ill humor."§

"Finally, our party succeeds over their's in good company."||

"Reason will triumph at least among all respectable people, the mob was not made for it."¶

It would be easy for us to multiply quotations. It was a disgrace in his eyes to have a shoemaker in one's family. "I pray you to pass through the Rue de la Harpe, and see if there is not there a shoemaker, a relative of the wretch (J. B. Rousseau) who is at Brussels and wishes to dishonor me."***

He mocked at Jean-Jacques, addressing himself to his nail merchants,†† and he, the historian of the Czar Peter, could not comprehend that the author of *Emile* should have made the situation of a joiner the completion of a philosophical education.

"He had a young man to bring up," he said, speaking of Rousseau, "and he made a joiner of him, to the depth of his book."‡‡

It was thus, that in the freedom and truth of intimate intercourse, Voltaire treated artisans, those who bear with groans the weight of civilization and its injustice, the people.

On the other hand, it is known how low he made the humility of his praise of the great descend, and in what puerile enjoyments the favor of courts retained his vanity captive, and how he loved to adorn himself with his title of gentleman of the chamber; it is known that he made a panegyric on Louis the Fifteenth, in which the excess of flattery was scandalous, and that one day addressing this king, the lowest of kings, he dared to call him Trajan; that the Duke de Richelieu, the hero of ostentatious routés and fashionable libertines, was his familiar friend; that he exclaimed, in speaking of Catherine, empress of Russia, "I am

* Correspondence de Voltaire à d'Alembert, t. 21. p. 194. Edit. Delarge, frères Paris, 1831. † Ibid. à Helvetius, t. 13, p. 223.

‡ Ibid. à Diderot, t. 14. p. 448. § Ibid. au Prince Royal de Prusse, t. 3. p. 3.

|| Ibid. à Helvetius, t. 13. p. 439. ¶ Ibid. à d'Alembert, t. 9. p. 475.

** Ibid. à l'Abbé Moussinot, t. 13. p. 12.

†† Correspondence de Voltaire à d'Alembert, t. 13. p. 12. Digitized by Google

‡‡ Ibid. à M. le Marquis d'Argence de Dirac. t. 15. p. 274.

Catherin and will die *Catherin*;"* that he placed himself at the feet of the favorites, even of her whom a house of debauchery reared for the pleasures of the master, and who, having become the royalty, dishonored its last gasp; and that finally he wrote to Frederick, king of Prussia, "You were made to be my king—the delight of the human race."†

"I dream of my prince, as one dreams of his mistress."‡

"If you knew how much your work (the anti-Machiavel,) is superior to that of Machiavel."§

"I wait here my master."|| "I send to my adorable master the anti-Machiavel."¶

"You have done what the people of Athens did. You alone are well worth this people."**

"Your majesty who have made yourself a man."††

"A prince to whom I have belonged,"‡‡ etc., etc.

Such flatteries, whether matter of calculation or sincere, were undignified, and Voltaire would never have abased himself so low, if he had had that generous pride which is drawn from a feeling of equality. But born with a supple nature, he found himself on his entrance into active life dazzled amid the Vendomes, the Richelieus, the Contis, the La Fares, the Chaulieus, and in that circle in which the art of the courtier belonged to the school of good taste, he lost all that constitutes bold characters and manly souls. Thus he only saw republics through history but by their bloody side. §§ Equality he believed realized, because God has placed grief by the side of joy, |||| as well for the monarch as the beggar. By turns, the denouncer and the slave of the privileges of birth, he attacked them from the top of the stage in his well known verses; but far from the crowd, far from the pit, and when he no longer had it to echo him, the son of the notary Arouet, remembered with complaisance, that he was of a noble race, through Marguerite d'Aumart, his mother, and he wrote, "When they print that I assume wrongfully the title of ordinary gentleman of the chamber to the king of France, am I not forced to say, that without even adorning myself with any title, I have still the honor to have this place, which his majesty, the king my master, has preserved for me? When they attack me about my birth, do I not owe it to my family to reply, that I was born the equal of those who have the same place as myself; and that if I have spoken about it with suitable modesty, it was because this very place was formerly filled by the Montmorencys and Chatillons?"¶¶

It was impossible for a man capable of holding such language, not to profess a worship for royalty, only Voltaire carried with it an exaggeration which it is difficult to comprehend. He wrote to Frederick, "I

* Correspondence de Voltaire à Catherine Second, t. 23. p. 18.

† Ibid. à Prince Royal de Prusse, t. 3. p. 88.

‡ Ibid. t. 5. p. 10.

§ Ibid. à Frederick Roi de Prusse, t. 5. p. 199.

|| Ibid. t. 5. p. 244.

¶ Ibid. t. 5. p. 254.

** Ibid. t. 7. p. 3.

†† Ibid. t. 5. p. 171.

‡‡ Ibid. à d'Alembert, t. 9. p. 262.

§§ Ibid. à M. le Chevalier de R——, t. 12. p. 262.

|||| Ibid. à M. Thierot, t. 4. p. 39.

¶¶ Correspondence de Voltaire à M. Kœnig, t. 8. p. 203.

would that all histories which point out to us the vices and furies of kings were cast into the depths of the sea."* And it is remarkable that on this point it was a king who refuted Voltaire.

But Voltaire was not convinced. He joined example to precept. He did not forget his strange system of the duties of an historian, neither in the *Age of Louis the Fourteenth*, nor in that of *Louis the Fifteenth*, nor in the *History of Charles the Twelfth*, nor in that of the *Czar Peter*. He only forgot it, when he had to avenge himself on Frederick in his memoirs,—the inconsistency of passion.

Voltaire was not made, as is seen, to seek the safety of the people in a political and social revolution. He never even dreamed of changing boldly, profoundly, the material conditions of the state and of society, and he did not begin to be disturbed about it, until towards the close of his career, on the alarm sounded by Diderot, Holbach and Raynal. We are struck with this absence of political studies in the six thousand nine hundred and fifty letters of which his correspondence is composed and in most of his works. He had no faith in the possibility of a vast renovation of the world. We may judge so from a letter written to M. Bastide in 1760, scarcely thirty years before the revolution. After having shown in a striking picture, those who labor in hunger, those who produce nothing in luxury, trembling vassals not daring to deliver their families from the wild boar that devours them, great proprietors appropriating to themselves even the bird that flies and the fish that swims; "this scene of the world, in almost all times and all places, would you change," he exclaims, "behold your folly and that of other moralists. The world will go on always as it is going."†

Was not that but a burst of chagrined philanthropy? No; and we should add, that the general tendency of the mind during a notable part of the eighteenth century was to neglect political or social questions for the most abstract problems in metaphysics. We will mark the hour in which this shall cease. But that solemn hour surprised Voltaire and made him tremble. Like Luther, he was long in discovering the path that led from religious to political abuses, from speculative philosophy to the material transformation of society, from the agitation of beliefs to the ebullition of interests. We have then to follow him no longer except first in the struggle against the power of priests, and then in his efforts to aggrandize the human being by isolating it.

He could not shake the empire of the priests, without separating their cause from that of the kings. To this he was naturally inclined, and it was the first means he employed. The long and implacable rivalry between the popes and the Cæsars; the Emperor Henry the Fourth on his knees before Gregory the Seventh; so many religious wars sprung from religious fanaticism; so many seditions preached from the steps of the altar; the sons of kings condemned by the inquisition; confessors more powerful than favorites, seizing on the authority of princes, at the same time as on their soul; usurping earth in the name of heaven, and governing the kingdoms they did not trouble; the Jesuits in the thirty years

* Correspondence de Frederick à Voltaire, t. 3. p. 309.

† Ibid. à M. de Bastide, t. 12. p. 377.

war; the league; regicidal monks. . . . What resources did not history furnish for Voltaire's plan of attack. He collected them all, and went to work with a formidable skill. "If most kings," he wrote to Frederick, when the latter was only Prince Royal of Prussia, "if most kings have encouraged fanaticism in their dominions, it is because they were ignorant, because they did not know the priests are their greatest enemies. Is there one example in the history of the world, of priests who have maintained harmony between princes and their subjects? Do we not on the contrary see every where, that it was priests who had raised the standard of discord and revolt? Was it not the Presbyterians of Scotland who commenced that unfortunate war which cost Charles the First his life, a king who was an honest man? Was it not a monk who assassinated Henry the Third, king of France? Is not Europe still full of the marks of ecclesiastical ambition? Bishops become princes, and then your colleagues in the Electoral College; a bishop of Rome trampling emperors under feet, are these not sufficiently strong testimonials?"*

On the other hand he studied hard to establish that philosophers were the natural allies of kings. He who dared every thing against the sacerdotal power, had not indignation enough against "the wretch who was mad enough to libel a king." We must be permitted to believe that if he had had a seat in the Convention, he would have violently opposed the condemnation of Louis the Sixteenth, he who being accused of having apologized for the judgment of Charles the First, defended himself in these terms, "how then could I have apologized for that execrable injustice? . . . I have consulted the book, (Letters upon the English,) in which this assassination, still more frightful from having borrowed the sword of legislation to commit it, is spoken of. I find that in it, this wicked crime is compared with that of Ravillac, with that of the Jacobin Clement, and with the still more enormous crime of the priest who used the body of Jesus Christ himself, in the communion, to poison the Emperor Henry the Seventh. Is that to justify the murder of Charles the First?"† This desire of sealing a close and durable alliance between philosophy and royalty was so lively with Voltaire, that we find the expression of it under his pen at every moment. "To be a good Christian, one must respect, serve, love his prince."‡

"Philosophers serve God and the king."§

"All the bulls in the world, (in speaking of a sickness of the Dauphin,) are not worth the breast and liver of the only son of the king of France."||

"Philosophers ask but for tranquillity, and there is not a theologian who would not desire to be the master of the state."¶

Thus following the example of Luther and Calvin, Voltaire preached at once, revolt against spiritual authorities, submission to temporal powers. A revolutionist in religion, he did not understand that there could be such a thing in politics; and he was honest in remaining obstinate in this in-

* Correspondence de Voltaire à Frederick, t. 3. p. 134.

† Ibid. à l'Abbé Prevost, t. 3. p. 489, 490.

‡ Ibid. à M. le Marquis Albergati Capicelli, t. 13. p. 484.

§ Ibid. à Helvetius, t. 12. p. 5.

|| Ibid. Damilaville, t. 18. p. 68.

¶ Ibid. au Prince Royal de Prusse, t. 3. p. 78.

consistency, so useful moreover to his plans,—for he always held the same language to his friends, his adepts, the confidants of his most secret thoughts, that he did to kings. He wrote to d'Alembert, “that it could not be doubted, that the cause of kings was that of philosophers; for it is evident that wise men who do not admit two powers, are the principal supports of royal authority.”*

The plan was skilfully drawn; history came to its aid. Voltaire had this rare good fortune, that his ideas were always served by events. Whilst he was thinking for his age, his age was acting for him; for example, at the very time he was calling out to princes to rid themselves of the theologians, of their domineering fanaticism, and of their cabals, a theological war set Paris on fire.

This war was sombre and furious; it impressed a movement on the passions which was never more to be arrested; it covered the religious factions with ridicule and opprobrium; it disturbed kings in the sense of the plans of Voltaire; it unchained in France the anger of a clandestine, inevitable press, and placing the royal and parliamentary power at strife, it hastened on the revolution into which they both ran to engulf themselves.

We have spoken of the morals of the high clergy, its mundane splendor, its opulence, its ardor in maintaining the inviolability of its wealth, though the people were gasping beneath the burthen of the public charges; we have told what passions beat beneath the Roman purple, and by what scandals the destinies of religion were compromised in France. But piety had for a long time been preserved in deposit by the inferior clergy, by the Jansenists; they had long imposed on themselves the glorious task of honoring their belief by the austerity of their lives; and when Fleury, become minister, had descended to persecute them, in order to gain the good graces of Rome, they had been seen, supported by public opinion, to draw the parliament into their quarrel, and display a firmness of soul, worthy of Saint-Cyran, of Nicole, and of Antoine Arnauld. It was suddenly learned that a holy man, a deacon, named Paris, had died, and that shortly afterwards a young girl had been seized with strange supernatural convulsions at the tomb of the saint. The Jansenists immediately awoke as from a deep sleep. Their dark devotion, exalted by the remembrance of former persecutions and by misfortune, determined them to try the fortune of miracles. The contagion spreads far and wide, it strikes sick or enfeebled brains, it seizes upon enthusiastic souls, it attracts the knavish. It was a true delirium. Scenes by turns alarming and voluptuous occurred in the asylum of the dead. Women came in a flowing and too free costume,† to rage upon a tomb, like a sybil of old upon the tripod. There were only mysterious and symbolical discourses, ecstasies, invocations of the Spirit of God. Some were raised by the feet with cords, shook their dishevelled hair, and passed from a state of fury to one of immoveable sadness. Others calling the *Secouristes* in a plaintive and caressing voice, asked them to walk over their

* Correspondence de Voltaire à d'Alembert, t. 18. p. 18.

† Examen critique, physique et théologique des convulsions, p. 18.

‡ They gave this name to persons who were employed to come to the assistance of the Convulsionists by striking them; or trampling on them with their feet, according to the desires of the Convulsionists themselves.

bodies, took lascivious attitudes, launched out into melancholy prophecies, or chanted unknown melodies.* Signs from on high, said the Jansenists, and those contortions which were equally offensive to reason and shame, they called divine prodigies; none doubted that by that means God wished to announce the unfathomable greatness of his designs for the church; that the prophet Elias was about to come.† And such extravagancies had full course in the eighteenth century, after the saturnalia of the regency, and in the midst of a frondeur people. In vain was the cemetery of Saint Medan, the first theatre of the agitation, closed by order; the number of *Convulsionists* only increased. Carrying away the earth of the holy tomb, they spread themselves through incredulous, but astonished Paris. Secret and sinister meetings were held in almost every quarter, of which some spoke with contempt, some with horror, all with surprise. Here sufferers had resisted blows of the lance or sword, by the virtue of faith alone; there placed upon the cross they had conquered pain and ruled death. They cited or could cite as incontestable, facts through which the power of the soul violently agitated in weak organizations shone out. Convulsionists believed themselves burned by touching bones or stones taken from ruins of Port Royal.‡ How many young girls were there who appeared to renew the tragedy of Calvary, who only trembled from the quiverings of love?§ How many whose foresight of the future, was but a resource from poverty, a means of assuring the present? And yet men matured by study, respectable personages, renowned writers, magistrates, permitted themselves to be present at sights whose indecency had a biblical colouring, and recalled to devoutly prejudiced minds, now the sleep of Noah, now the apparent madness of David, or even the nudity of Saul, rolling in the dust.||

Thus Port Royal, its severity and its virtues, was no longer represented but in conventicles, where artifice was mingled with a thirst for pungent pleasures; that credulity which, in Nicole had been but the exaggeration of zeal, and in Pascal but a sublime melancholy, led to a suspected mysticism; theology was decrying its own reign, already threatened by the revolution which was muttering; and the victims destined for Voltaire ran of themselves before that king of mockers.

How every thing leads to revolutions when their time is approaching. Whilst the Jansenists were becoming *convulsionists*, the Jesuits, factious in an inverted sense, were becoming intolerant, even to scandal. It has been said, that in order the better to place Voltaire in the right, the different representatives of the religious idea were carrying on a sort of emulation in troubling the state.

There is nothing to surprise us in the clergy, in 1749, opposing an edict by which Machault, a philosophical minister, laid taxes on ecclesiastical property; the bishops remained faithful to their habits in refusing to contribute to the public charges on a footing of equality. But they

* De Lan, docteur, Dissertation theologique contre les convulsions, part 2. p. 70. 1733.

† Examen critique, physique et theologique des convulsions, p. 17.

‡ Troisième lettre sur l'Œuvre des convulsions, er trait, t. 57. du Recueil general.

§ Doctor Hecquet, Naturalisme des convulsions, p. 119, 170, 183. etc. Soleure, 1733.

|| Plan general de l'Œuvre des convulsions, p. 7. vol. 57. du Recueil.

did not confine themselves to a lofty refusal. After having declared in the remonstrances of the 24th of August, 1749,* which were deliberated upon in general assembly, that the servants of God were only bound for *gratuitous gifts*; that their immunities in matters of impost formed a part of the constitutional monarchy; that they could not lay an impost on the ministers of the church without *lowering them and reducing them to the condition of other subjects of the king*, the clergy conceived the bold plan of averting the dangers of an obstinate refusal, by re-awakening the religious quarrels, so as to occupy the exclusive attention of the parliament, the court and public opinion. Then was revived by the Archbishop of Paris and the Jesuits that too famous bull *Unigenitus*, a fire-brand of discord thrown into France from the top of the Vatican, then the obligation of adhering to the bull became a true signal of war, and as it were, a set-off to the miracles or buffooneries of Jansenism. Without a billet of confession, setting forth the prescribed adhesion, there were no more sacraments, no more passports for the journey to heaven. The Jansenists were indignant, the parliament fulminated, but the Jesuits stood firm, and the resistance was suitable to inflame the zeal of Christophe de Beaumont, a prelate endowed with violent virtues and born to be either a persecutor or a martyr. The disorder was then immense. The curates were interdicted by the archbishop if they granted the sacraments without the billet of confession, and were struck by a decree of the parliament if they refused; dying persons imploring in vain for the last consolations; thousands of men assembled at the doors of the churches around dead bodies which awaited sepulture; priests who fled, carrying away the key of the tabernacle; whole families alarmed in their belief; extreme unction administered no longer by virtue of the power of the man of God, but by that of a sentence by the tribunals;† the viaticum carried about in the emeute: fanaticism erect between the dead and the coffins open to receive them;—such was the religious Paris of the eighteenth century. The clergy saved its property . . . but what of its authority?

Its authority received a thousand mortal blows. Whilst a celebrated pamphlet, published under the simple name of *the Letters* sapped the ecclesiastical privileges, a vehement one cast in the teeth of certain preachers of the humble virtues of the gospel, their horses, equipages, palaces, services of gold plate, sumptuous gardens, known concubines,§ at the same time in the interior of houses, between piles of wood in the wood yards, in boats on the Seine, every where where there was a chance of avoiding the observation of a dark power, was printed the *Ecclesiastical News*, a powerful, poisoned arm, which the Jansenists managed in the shade with an incomparable address. These sheets drawn up by theologians against theologians, by priests against priests, had, carried about by hatred, a publicity whose flight nothing could arrest; they cir-

* Cited at length in the introduction to the *Fastes de la Revolution Francaise*, par Marrast et Dupont, p. 152.

† Soulavie, *Histoire de la decadence de la Monarchie Francaise*, t. 3. p. 164.

‡ See the *Memories Ecclesiastiques* de l'Abbé Picot, t. 2. p. 220, 234.

§ This pamphlet was published by the title of *Remonstrances du Second ordre du Clergé, au sujet du Vingtième*.

culated, thanks to ingenious artifices, and without number; they were stuck along walls by children concealed in the baskets which women carried on their backs;* the lieutenant of police, Herault, had the humiliation of finding copies in his carriage; they penetrated to the court, they inundated the city. . . . And the philosophers applauded, for it was they and they only who were to profit by the blows struck on either side. Their leader moreover had already commenced the attack so earnestly announced by the malice of Fontenelles and the *Persian Letters* of Montesquieu.

Shamefully insulted, in 1726, by a great Lord, from whom he demanded the satisfaction of a gentleman, and who, as his sole reply, had him cast into the Bastille, Voltaire left his prison only to go into exile, and had found at London an asylum, the liberty of writing and friends. At the villa of Lord Bolingbroke whither Pope and Swift came, he had met the boldest thinkers of England, he had there heard the sarcasms of learned incredulity; revelation was there denied, theology covered with contempt, metaphysics even treated as an useless pastime. They believed there in the existence of a God, but of an unrevealed, inaccessible God, of whom it was folly to seek the enigma, and they invited man to espouse nature by reposing in the idea, that "*whatever is right.*"† It was there that Voltaire had drunk in that Epicurean deism which he then carried among the French, softened, husbanded, preached with elegance and good taste, but without the exaggeration of optimism,—for Voltaire will one day write *Candide*. On the other hand he read the works of the wise Locke, "the only one who has taught the human mind to understand itself,"‡ and he had yielded without effort to the doctrine renewed from Aristotle, *our ideas are derived from our senses*. What remains to be said? The enthusiastic applause with which the English hailed the *Henriade*, an epic poem on liberty of conscience, had only encouraged him in his design to destroy fanaticism.

Thus Voltaire, on returning to France, carried with him the education England had given him; his religion was *deism*, his philosophy *sensation*, his system of morality *tolerance*. The overthrow of christianity was his aim.

He might, if necessary, have found motives for aggression in the circumstances of his own life. The priests had refused burial to Made-moiselle Le Couvreur, a poor actress, a *Phedra* whom he had tenderly loved. The *convulsions*! who than he understood their falsehoods better, whose brother, Armand Arouet, had formed a seraglio from the handsomest convulsionists.§ But the action of men of the stamp of Voltaire is not to be explained by biographical details. Nothing less than the history of an age is here necessary to explain a man. The time had come, and Voltaire broke out in the *English letters*.||

* Dulaure, *Historie de Paris* Sou Louis quinze, p. 139.

† Pope's *Essay on man*.

‡ *Dictionnaire philosophique*, t. 6. Word Locke.

§ Note of Clogenon on a letter from Voltaire to the abbé Moussinot, correspondence, t. 3, p. 232.

|| They are better known by the name of the Philosophical Letters. Remoulded in the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, they no longer exist in the body of the work. M. Beuchot alone has preserved them in his great edition, (see Quérara.)

These letters were an entire intellectual revolution; the parliament burned them by the hands of the executioner, and the bookseller Jore lost his freeman's privileges. But the impulse was given. Voltaire mocked at the parliament which had thus condemned the emetic, that had then cured counsellors of the great chamber;* and having taken refuge at Cirey, the residence of the Marchioness de Chatelet, he set to work to furbish for himself new arms.

The domain of Christendom was however guarded by a great shade, that of Pascal, and it was necessary to set it aside, in order to go further on. Thus Voltaire's first study was to break the glory of Pascal.

The author of the *Thoughts* had had recourse to a system of an imposing devotion, in order to establish the truths of Christianity. He had presented it as alone fit to explain what there was at once sublime and miserable in human nature.

Burthened with ennui, as incapable of happiness as of knowledge, using the few days allotted to him in pursuing phantoms, as impatient of his joys as of his woes, devoured with the desire of forgetfulness, and in the dizziness of his ambition, as in the tumult of his feasts, seeking but a means of ridding himself of a sight of himself, to avoid the silence of his heart, man was, according to Pascal, but imbecility and corruption.

But on the other hand, Pascal could not avoid admiring this human being whom he so cruelly abased. For, in fine, man belongs to God, since he has an idea of him. His feet are, it is true, fixed to the earth by palpable attachments; wait a little; behold him mounting to the highest region of the stars; behold him watching over the centre of sleeping worlds. Are you not astonished if, knowing that he shall die in an hour, he preserves a calm and bold countenance; whilst they are nailing the boards of his coffin, his immortality is occupying him. He may never discover the causes and the end, but he is constantly endeavoring to do so; and if his weakness betrays itself in the constant uselessness of his effort, his superiority shines out, but the brighter in his inexhaustible audacity and his indomitable desire. He loves, he wishes, he hopes, and this power of hope gives the lie to a belief of annihilation.

How can so much greatness associated with so much misery be explained? Why does the infinite attract our thought, since it but oppresses it, and fills it with dread? Wandering atoms in the moveable immensity of the heavens, whence do we derive that invincible desire of fixing around us that which bears us on, of embracing that which swallows us up? Pascal found no other solution to these questions, than the famous hypothesis of the primitive majesty of man and his fall, and adopting the doctrine of original sin as the point of departure of christianity, he exclaimed, "without this mystery, the most incomprehensible of all, we are ourselves incomprehensible to ourselves."†

It was certainly a stroke of genius to make it a result of the christian religion, that it alone could render an account of man, his intimate nature, his greatness and the surprising contrasts which are remarked in him. And what profundity is there in this language addressed to the incredulous

* Correspondance de Voltaire, t. 2. p. 54.

† Pensées de Pascal, § 3, p. 37, edit. of 1674.

lous; yes, there is doubtless something dark and terrible in a doctrine which shows us the whole human race fallen, in expiation of a fault committed by the first of them; but if this belief is wanting to us, our mind enters upon a still darker night. For then it is, we ourselves who are the frightful and highest mystery.

Voltaire, opposed to truths of so high, and we must add so heroic a bearing, that piercing mockery and strong good sense which constituted his genius. What! that man should be *inconceivable, without an inconceivable mystery*.* Had they thus transformed into an explanation that which needed so much to be explained? It was not the business of religion to render an account of the pretended contrarieties of human nature, nor did it demonstrate its truth. But besides, what advantage had the Christian religion in this respect over the old fables of Prometheus and Pandora, the Androgynes of Plato, or the doctrines of the ancient Egyptians, or of Zoroaster ††

Voltaire thus followed the illustrious defender of the Christian religion step by step. Had Pascal lived at the same time as Voltaire, we may imagine what a magnificent sight the combat of these two sovereign intellects would have afforded to the world. But Voltaire was attacking a genius fallen into eternal silence; he was laughing before a tomb.

It must also be said that Pascal had allowed himself to be drawn by the alarm with which doubt inspired him, into affirmations too cruel to be true. Had not he, the sad continuer of Calvin and Jansenius, engraved their desolating doctrine into the brass of his style? But let us not judge him after his adhesion to Jansenism, the bitter fruit of his despair. It had been his misfortune to wish to know every thing; he died of it. Desirous of certainty, he had addressed himself to the senses, to feeling, and to reason; and he had found in those three so much vaunted sources of our knowledge but false judgments, suspicious testimony, variable and contradictory impressions. The fulcrum which Archimedes demanded with which to raise the globe, Pascal would have desired to raise the immaterial world; and the lever which he always carried about in his strong hand found but a void. Convinced, then, of the impotence of reason, he struggled to believe, to believe like idiots or children. He would have become, if he could, humble and small; this consolation would have been, to be ignorant of himself; but faith did not grant him the repose which reason refused him. Is religion very certain? We believe; it is less dangerous to do so than not to believe. Such was, half confessed in his book, the deep and constant thought of this great man at his last gasp. He could neither doubt nor believe, by which is explained what appears to be sublime and puerile in him. The puerility of Pascal. . . . Could any thing be more moving? Let us, then, not accuse him without a painful respect, him, alas, so uncertain, so combated, so much a martyr to his own genius, of having blasphemed the cause of progress. But let us rather remember that by some of his immortal pages, he deserves to be placed in the revolutionary tradition.

* *Remarques sur les Pensées de Pascal*, t. 11. des *Œuvres Complètes de Voltaire*. Edit. 1785.

† *Ibid.* p. 373.

"The power of kings is founded upon reason and the folly of the people, but chiefly upon the folly. Equality of property is just; but unable to cause it to be forced to obey justice, it has caused it to be just to obey force." "This dog is mine, said these poor children; this is my place in the sun; this was the beginning and the image of the usurpation of all the earth." Thus had spoken Pascal, when Voltaire appeared, and Voltaire was never to surpass these limits.

Among the ruling writers of the preceding century, Descartes appeared to Voltaire still more dangerous than Pascal. Why?

One day, when shut up alone in a room during the winter, Descartes was communing with his thoughts,* he conceived the heroic design of destroying from top to bottom the edifice of opinions which had, until then been adopted, sure of being enabled to rebuild it with truer ideas, better proved, or with the same when *he should have adjusted them to the level of his reason.*† Behold him, then, doubting every thing; casting from his mind by an unexampled effort, all beliefs which repose upon the authority of other men. It is done; he has around him but a void and night. But in order to doubt, we must at least think that we doubt; and to think, we must be. Thus one thing remained invincibly erect, in the solitude of worlds which had vanished like the visions of a dream, thought; and the certainty of thought furnishing Descartes with that of existence, he had found a basis for the temple of human knowledge which he dared to proclaim unshakeable. *I think, then, I am*, a first, incontestable truth, which was to serve him, by deduction on deduction, to establish all the others. From the thinking nature of man, once admitted, Descartes will draw in succession the proof that we have a soul distinct from the body; the proof that there is a God; the proof, that the external world is real,‡ etc. . . . And after having thus reconstructed the edifice which it pleased him to pull down, he will loudly and boldly declare it indestructible. Doubt no more in God, nor the soul, nor the real world; Descartes has found the principle of certainty, and the notions he has deduced from it he now assures us are as certain as geometrical theorems. He has abandoned doubt; but he has exhausted, he has conquered it; he has seized upon the right of examination for his own use, but he has disarmed it. For a moment a revolutionist in philosophy, he appears to have had the pretension to close the gate on revolutions for ever. Yesterday he doubts, to-day he imposes himself.

We see how Voltaire, in the independence of his mind, was to be wounded by that which the Cartesian doctrines presented as absolute and imperious. How was he to attack the church with efficacy, if he admitted the infallibility of that Descartes who had employed the same reason in the demonstration of matters of faith which the church taught in those of philosophy? Thus he shows himself everywhere in his books, very

* Discours sur la Methode, part 2. p. 7, de l'Edition Charpentier. † Ibid. p. 8.

‡ See the Six Méditations touchant la Philosophie Première.

M. de Lammenais has set forth with much force and beauty what is contradictory or erroneous in the demonstrations of Descartes, and the insufficiency of his philosophy, as a foundation for certainty. See l'Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de la religion, part 3. chap. 1. t. 2. p. 84 et suiv. Edit. Pagnerre.

animated against the celebrated inventor of the *Method*. He wished the public to abstain from reading him; he denounced him as a deceitful guide, and who was not even exempt from charlatanism. "All his calculations are false," he exclaimed, "every thing is false about him, except the sublime application of Algebra to geometry, which he was the first to make."^{*}

Voltaire, moreover, in seeking to shake the reputation of Descartes, in decrying his metaphysics, in exalting Locke, in preaching the doctrine of *sensations*, was the man of his period, and the faithful apostle of individualism. For if by thought man spreads himself abroad, and lavishes himself, by sensation, on the contrary, he draws every thing to himself. Take a philosopher, believing in sensualism and inconsistent in his faith; there is nothing around him which is not created to serve him or to please him. The sun does not shine in the heavens but to give him the idea of light through the sense of sight. He becomes a point of convergence in the midst of the Universe. What importance attributed to the individual! But also what encouragement to egotism. In the logic of such a system, do not expect from man sublime devotion to abstract evil or to remote misfortunes; the sensualist has but relative notions; he is only interested in what he touches; he has no compassion but for visible griefs, for seizable misfortune; he is only moved by the groans which strike his ear; his ideal finally does not surpass the bounds of the horizon. He will not have, unless his heart contradicts his theory, those noble bursts, which, on the wings of thought, and with the disinterestedness it gives, and the suddenness of its flight, transports us beyond the sensible world, and elevates us from surrounding sensation to those summits from whence we take in mankind.

But it was because it served the cause of individualism that the philosophy of sensations was to prevail in the eighteenth century. Hobbes had inaugurated it in England under its brutal forms; Locke had given to it wiser attractions; Voltaire imported it into France without pedantry; Condillac developed it clearly, methodically, with austere elegance, and by means of an ingenious hypothesis. He supposed a man in the condition of an organized statue, he then explained how he receives his first ideas through the eyes; how more just and complete notions were then furnished him by the sense of touch, instructing that of sight.[†] The eye sees, sensation leads him to look, experience teaches him to discern, to choose. Full of his hypothesis, which he found happy, Condillac prolonged it at pleasure; he led his *impressive* statue through a thousand accidents of life; he made him afraid of the darkness, waiting until it should be dethroned by the dawn, so as to give him a measure of time, and even the idea of its duration by the alternatives of day and night.[‡]

In confounding sensation with the idea, or rather in rendering the idea the daughter of the sensation, Condillac rendered the soul the slave of the senses; he reduced it, even in its boldest flight, to the condition of the bird which draws the bonds of its servitude after it in the air.

* Correspondance de Voltaire, lettre au Marquis d'Argens, t. 4. p. 391.

† Condillac, traité des Sensations, p. 3. chap. 3. t. 3. des Œuvres, p. 273.

‡ Ibid. chap. 7. p. 329-334.

The philosophy of Condillac tended consequently to particularize the sentiments of man; it led to individualism. After having gone over the world, inhaled the perfume of flowers, listened to the harmonies of nature, tasted the fruits of earth, and rendered perfect the education of his organs, it was to happen that this statue would become a man, proclaim its personality, crown itself with its own hands and remount upon its pedestal.

We have told who was the leader, shown the flag; it will soon be time to set the army in motion. But first, who is to assemble it and lead it to the conflict? Voltaire, almost constantly absent from Paris, could only command it from a distance, and it was under his inspiration, rather than his orders that it was to march forward.

It is rare there is not in an army one of those cynical, fiery and good captains, insubordinate but illustrious, who brave defeat and attempt impossibilities, who fight whenever there is any fighting, and who, to decide battles, have frequently but to show themselves, with their clothes and hair in disorder and their arms extended. These sympathetic heroes are called Kleber at Heliopolis, Danton in the Assembly, Diderot among militant philosophers.

Diderot was not a great burgher lord like Voltaire. The son of the good smith of Langres* was not the man to mince with princes whilst striking priests. Thus he had no precautions, no reticences, his life is all above board. He constantly passes and repasses across the eighteenth century, always awake, ready to venture, speaking loud, overflowing with humor, full of warmth, and tormented with the desire of communicating the fire which animates him. Endowed with the noblest of generousities, that of the mind, he spends his ideas with the carelessness of a rich profligate. Now he would insert some revolutionary chapter into the *Philosophical History of the two Indies*, by Abbé Raynal,† and now improvise burning pages for the *correspondence of Grimm*. In his fifth story of the Taranne, where philosophers, poets, abbés, fools and princes visited him, he opened his door to every one. He gave his talent and his genius to the first comer—he never sold them.

The action of Diderot on his epoch was immense, and it was exercised principally by speech. There his revolutionary nature shone out, and the best pages of his works are only torches of inflammatory discourses. At the meetings of the philosophers at the house of Madame Geoffrin he astonished by his brilliant sketches and his biting paradoxes. In vain did Suard sometimes oppose some just and delicate observations to him, his dazzling inspiration effaced everything, and he easily elevated chatting to eloquence, when they touched in the least some fibre of his rich organization, an instrument of a thousand strings, which resounded to the least vibrations of the surrounding atmosphere.

Borne along on imagination, Diderot no sooner approached a question than he reached its extremities. If he laid hold upon love for nature, he loved it so as to confound it with God, as he did in his famous *Lett-*

* Thus Diderot called his father the cutler.

† De Meister, a la mémoire de Diderot in the notes.

ter on the Blind.* If he studied matter, he discomposed it with so much passion, that soon losing himself in the midst of admired phenomena, he thought he had there discovered a latent and deep sensibility, which, by the combinations of successful industry, might develop itself so as to become thought, even conscience.† If he explored the domain of morality, he concluded by making it dependent on our organs, and exclaimed, "Ah, madam, the morality of the blind is different from ours. That of a deaf man is still different from that of a blind one, and could a being have a sense more than we, it would find our morality imperfect."‡ Were not our manners a tyranny of human invention? It is not repugnant to Diderot to think so, and when, in the *Supplement to the Journey of Bougainville*, he celebrates the grandeurs and freedom of the savage state; his end appears to be less to stigmatize the learned corruption of societies than to free them from shame. Unfortunately the traces of the philosophical boldness sown in the *Interpretations of Nature* and *Dialogue on the Dream of d'Alembert* were not to be so soon effaced; they will reappear in the lowest depths of the French Revolution.

On the other hand, what fruitful excesses spring from this excess of boldness. Might it not be said that Diderot was of our nineteenth century when he wrote, "You pity a blind man? What is a wicked one, but one who is short-sighted?"§ Or, when having taken refuge in a corner of the *Cafe de la Regence*, he draws, in imperishable characters, the figure of the *Nephew of Rameau*, a strange person, without a model in books, as curious as Panurgus, less common and more profound than Figaro. Oh! society, look, if you can, with coolness into what a degree of abasement the select nature of this *Neveu de Rameau* has fallen!|| What has become of that superior intelligence? Why is his natural greatness but a powerful and calm buffoonery, but serenity in abjection? Clothed in his rags, which remind Diderot of the toren garments of his indigent youth, Rameau confesses his state of degradation with the good taste of an old gentleman.

He is a miserable, but inoffensive creature, whose mind has preserved itself delicate and transcendent, whilst his soul was descending into the dirt. A hackney coach is his ordinary asylum, his only friend. He frequently passes clear nights in the Champs Elysées, where he is met dressed, on the watch for to-morrow. He lives by the grotesque of his misery, with which he amuses himself, borrowing a crown he will never return. His ridiculousness is paid by a piece of bread. A tragical caricature of the depravity to which an intelligent, an human being may be reduced in the bosom of society, which breathing passions into him and leaving him poor, gives him a choice between pressing immorality and heroism. Do you not perceive, as it were, a presight of the nineteenth century and a presentiment of cotemporary socialism?

* He has himself explained his thought in his reply to Voltaire on the subject of this letter: "The universe is God," he says.

† Entretiens sur le rêve de d'Alembert. The speakers are the physician Borden and Mademoiselle L'Espinasse, the celebrated friend of d'Alembert.

‡ Lettre sur les aveugles, Œuvres de Diderot, t. 1. p. 298. Edit. Brière.

§ Eucyclopédie, word Vice, défaut.

|| See the *Neveu de Rameau*, t. 22, Œuvres de Diderot, Edit. Brière.

Now that the philosophers are agitating the performance of a common work, Diderot will be the indispensable man. He alone in fact summed up the variations of the philosophical mind. To-day a dreamer, to-morrow, a geometrician, or a mechanician, more universal than Voltaire, capable of maintaining with the materialist physicians that thought is but a fermentation of the brain, and of then going to weep at the hermitage with the spiritualist, Jean-Jacques, over the misfortunes of the *new Heloise*, Diderot alone penetrated and knew his philosophical friends, he alone was fit to be at once a bond and a spur, to change their doubts to anger, to lead their disordered troop to the assault, after having rendered it as impetuous and determined as himself. We are now at the foundation of the *Encyclopædia*.

I figure to myself an architect, who, under pretext of verifying all the stones which compose a monument, shall detach them from each other, demolish the whole building gradually, and after having destroyed it from top to bottom, shall leave the ground strewn with ruins; behold a picture of the work of the Encyclopedists.

What boldness! To examine every thing, to shake every thing without exception and without respect;* to unite in one work the innumerable treasures of human knowledge; to recall the opinions of so many sages of antiquity or of modern times, their beliefs, their doubts, their contradictions, their uncertainties, or the torments of their minds; to embrace, to enclose in an alphabetical dictionary, that which was never confounded; theology and physics, commerce and belles-lettres, natural history, the arts, languages, religion, and that in the apparent order which the chance of initials furnishes, and which is in truth, but a vast disorder; to call the old world to a sight of its decomposition, to analyze it, to take it to pieces, and to use the light of the past for its better destruction. . . . Such an enterprise did not astonish the passionate boiling genius of Diderot, and who notwithstanding his daily mobility was obstinate in his plans.

The Encyclopædia is then the summing up of the philosophical eighteenth century; its great work. The age of Descartes had proceeded by synthesis, that of Voltaire was to proceed by analysis. The one had found and vaunted the method, the other disdains and denies it.

We feel a vague sentiment of sadness in going over the *Encyclopædia*. We may believe in those fields of Palmyra, rendered celebrated by their ruins. The demonstration of the existence of God, the theory of the intellect, the disputes of men about the soul, its origin and its destiny are presented, mixed up with descriptions of machines, or the proceedings of chemistry. The confusion is immense. And of so many sciences there remain but words, of each whole but parts, of each family but individuals; a thousand scattered stones mark the place of what was a monument.

But as a work of scepticism, could the *Encyclopædia* affect any other form? To give order to notions and to arrange them, is to believe, to recognize a guide, and to follow it. Disorder is natural to skeptics; it characterized the work of Bayle in the seventeenth century.

* See l'Encyclopédie, the word Encyclopédie, by Diderot.

The Encyclopedists did not think of bequeathing any thing but destruction and night to succeeding generations. They went on hurling down old beliefs, without scruple and without hesitation, because they counted on leaving a book whose materials would serve to remake knowledge, because they figured to themselves that after the deluge of human opinions, their ark would swim upwards, filled with the elements necessary to repeople the intelligent universe.

It certainly required uncommon audacity to conceive such plans, and what prudence did not their execution demand. These two qualities were found in the two editors of the *Encyclopedie*. Diderot the most adventurous of thinkers had, as his colleague, d'Alembert, the most prudent of philosophers; powerful and singular association. An illustrious geometrician of the first class, the prince of science and dispenser of academical crowns, d'Alembert had always watched attentively over the tranquillity of his glory. Doubt was the constant habit of his mind, in matters of religion and even of metaphysics, and his whole correspondence pronounces him skeptical; but the incredulity which he vented with a smile in his confidential letters, he veiled with a careful hand from orthodox looks, or at least, he only allowed the permitted side to be seen. His finesse, a little crafty, thus concealed the philosophical intemperance of Diderot, always ready for encroachment. Yes, whilst the rash author of the *letter on the blind*, left the donjon of Vincennes as impetuous as he had entered it,* whilst he was letting off sallies of impiety, declaiming his dithyrambs against God, and opening his two great hands, which he believed to be full of truths, d'Alembert, a more skilful tactician than even Voltaire himself, was concealing himself to crush the wretch, and was lancing the arrow without showing his hand.†

This circumspection of d'Alembert, rendered him eminently fit to write the *preliminary discourse of the Encyclopedie*. Talent, moderation, fitness, dignity, nothing was wanting in this luminous exposition of human knowledge and its glorious chain. He drew a picture of the marvels to which modern genius had given birth, an imposing tableau, in which France and foreign nations could read with pride the names of Descartes, Pascal, Galileo, Newton, Leibnitz, and that Francis Bacon, from whom d'Alembert had borrowed his method. This preliminary discourse was a master piece of skill. He laid down in it the principles of the spirituality of the soul and the existence of God,‡ with as much firmness as Descartes could have done. The conscience of moral truths he called the *evidence of the heart*,§ recognizing in it the same empire as in mathematical axioms. In a word, he affected an orthodoxy, we may be permitted to suspect.

Adopting moreover the philosophy of the day in its least compromising part, d'Alembert had carefully left the doctrine of sensations,|| which is essentially, as we have said, the doctrine of individualism, in the shade.

* He left it in 1749, on the eve of publishing the *Encyclopedie*. Naiglon, *Memoire sur la vie et les ouvrages de Diderot*, p. 131.

† Correspondance de Voltaire, t. 16, p. 457.

‡ Discours preliminaire de l'*Encyclopedie*, p. 7. Edit. de Lausanne, 1781.

§ Ibid. p. 24.

|| "We owe all our ideas to our sensations." Ibid p. 2.

Thus the illustrious writer contradicted himself when he saluted the authority of genius, the feeling which creates, the authority of taste, the feeling which judges. Where the philosophy of sensations reigns, each one can judge in his own fashion and exclaim, by what right do you impose rules on me which my personal sensations reject? If the frieze of the Pantheon does not touch me, if the coloring of Rubens does not enchant me, I deny Rubens and Phidias.

Thus in looking at it nearer, the revolutionary movement penetrated the discourse intended to hide it; for it is certain, that the work of d'Alembert was but a magnificent curtain drawn over the overthrow of old beliefs.

Though we may refuse to honor so much dissimulation, it is not for us to dare to gainsay it. Would it be just to forget under what regime the philosophers wrote, and what our enfranchised pen owes to their stratagems? And they knew their times well. Scarcely had some volumes of the Encyclopedia appeared, when fanaticism devoured them to find a revolutionary idea in them. In vain did they read the signature of an abbé below the articles *Soul*, *Atheist*, *God*,* the sagacity of the Molinists discovered, without difficulty, the heresy of fatalism in some obscure article. It may be remarked that at the word *fortuitous*, the malicious geometrician shook the theory of free-will, formally recognized in the preliminary discourse. The pitiless clear-sightedness of the Jansenists of parliament, among whom Voltaire distinguished *tigers with the eyes of calves*,† noted the materialism of Diderot, exclaiming, "what matters it, whether matter thinks or not?"‡ It did not escape the theologians of the Sorbonne, nor the zealots of the great chamber, nor the violent defenders of the bull *Unigenitus*, that if the article *God* was irreproachable, the reader referred to the article *Demonstration* would find in it features of a distant, but as they judged, no less dangerous idea against the idea of the infinite.

They must be then extremely careful and hide the philosophical temerities of the Abbé de Prades, of Morellet, of Dumasais, of Raynal, and finally, of Voltaire himself, writing under the name of a priest of Lausanne, behind the assuring joint labors of the Abbé Yvon and the Chevalier de Jancourt; a stratagem over which the ardent and open soul of Diderot, groaned whilst submitting to the necessity, but to which his calm co-laborer bent without an effort. Thus when Voltaire complained of meeting in the *Encyclopedia* articles on metaphysics and theology, worthy, in his opinion, of having a place in the *Journal de Trevoux*, which was drawn up by the Jesuits, the geometrical philosopher replied calmly to him, "there are other articles less open in which every thing is repaired. Time will distinguish what we have thought from what we have said."§

The work, however, drew innumerable vexations on its two principal authors; they pursued them with satires which were authorized, applaud-

* These articles are by the Abbé Yvon, see *Correspon. de Voltaire*.

† Voltaire called Pasquier so, in his *Correspondance avec d'Alembert*, t. 21, p. 118.

‡ See the word *Locke* in the *Encyclopedia*.

§ *Corres. de Voltaire*, letter from d'Alembert to Voltaire, t. 10. p. 13.

ed, recompensed and commanded by the party of the Dauphin; the eye of the censors was constantly on the formidable book; and *tocsins* were sounded against it at Versailles,* which announced an imminent persecution. D'Alembert was discouraged. In the article *Geneva*, he had sought to prove that protestanism leads to socinianism, that is to the denial of the divinity of Jesus Christ; the ministers of Geneva, whom they congratulated on their tendency to incredulity, considered themselves insulted; they protested, they complained to the court of France, and d'Alembert resolved to abandon the *Encyclopedia*. But Voltaire encouraged the combatants from afar; he conjured d'Alembert not to afford to his enemies the joy of his retreat; he asked him with disquietude, if any thing had affected the union of the associates, if Diderot continued firm; he said to them all, "if you separate, you are lost."† But persecution could do nothing against a work which was borne on, as it were, by the eighteenth century, which appeared under the auspices of the Count d'Argenson,‡ and which had its protectors in the cabinet of Choiseul, in the palace of the king. Censured by the briefs of the pope, struck at by the decrees of the council, exposed to the wrath of the parliament, the *Encyclopedia* remained erect.§ A new Trojan horse had entered the walls of the besieged city. Old society had first seen it introduce itself into their midst without distrust; and soon the philosophers sallied out armed and led by Ulysses to take, to sack Illium.

The proud and impatient desire of battering down the authority of traditions, by convincing the general feeling of folly, the pretension in each to render himself a judge of every thing, in a word, rationalism was what appeared then to prevail.

There was this remarkable about it, that instead of abasing reason as Montaigne had done, the philosophers of the eighteenth century vaunted it extravagantly. In this was the secret of their difference; Montaigne had attacked the social state not only in this or that form but in its essence; and it was by denying that man was made to live in society, by comparing him with the animals, that he had been led to uncrown reason. The philosophers of the eighteenth century in the apostleship of individualism, were careful not to go as far as Montaigne. They did not tell man to fly society, on the contrary they told him to remain in it, but to live in it independently. And how could this independence be assured, how could the chain of traditional or imposed beliefs be broken except by speaking in the name of reason and professing its worship?

Reason, unfortunately, when each one seeks it for himself, is not a divinity easy to recognize. The reason of Pascal was not that of Voltaire, nor was the reason of Voltaire that of Jean-Jacques. By proclaiming the unrestricted religion of rationalism absolutely, they reared as many rival altars, as there were faithful. Thus the intellectual anarchy was immense.

* Corres. de Voltaire, letter from d'Alembert to Voltaire, t. 10. 192.

† Ibid. t. 10. p. 186, 199, 234, 290.

‡ Ibid. t. 14. p. 88.

§ The *Encyclopedia* appeared in 1751. The first decree for its suppression was on the 7th of January, 1752; the brief of Pope Clement the Thirteenth, of the 3d of September, 1759. Parliament had passed a decree of condemnation in the preceding March. The last ten volumes did not appear until 1760.

The meetings of the philosophers at the house of the Baron de Holbach at dinners on Sundays and Thursdays brought to light the most profound differences; one could have divined with difficulty the existence of a school in those periodical banquets, those states general of philosophy, in which the variety of temperaments was not the only secret for the divergency of thought. Enter the house of the Baron de Holbach, listen to the noise of the conversations which intersect each other, or even to a solemn discussion; the guests are not agreed upon a single point, neither about God, nor morality, nor free will, nor the soul. Diderot, drowning all voices, exclaims with warmth, against the God of fanatics, and we may believe that we hear him exclaiming, "Wherever there is a God, there is a worship, wherever there is a worship the order of moral duties is reversed. A moment comes in which the notion that has prevented a crown from flying, murders an hundred thousand men."* In vain did the Abbé Morellet supported by Suard and Marmontel, intrepidly sustain the God of the Sorbonne against the brilliant eloquence of Diderot and the formidable learning of Holbach; it needs an Italian, whom we shall hereafter find to be an original figure, to come to the support of Deism by some brilliant and familiar sally. "I suppose, gentlemen, my friend Diderot playing at dice in one the best houses in Paris, and his antagonist, winning once, twice, three or as much as six times steadily. For fear lest the game should last, my friend Diderot, who was losing his money, will unhesitatingly say, 'the dice are cugged, I am in a cut-throat place.' Ah, philosopher, how now? Because ten or twelve dice have rolled from the box so as to make you lose six francs, you believe that it is in consequence of an adroit manœuvre, a well woven knavery, and seeing in this universe so prodigious a number of combinations a thousand times more complicated, better sustained and more useful, . . . do you not suspect that the dice of nature are also cugged, and that there is above a great knave who makes it a sport to entrap you."† Thus under a trivial and gay form did Galiani renew the most serious argument of the confessors of the divinity against atheism. Let us see if there was any thing which was not questioned by these assembled philosophers? The Divinity? Freret regards it as a phantom of our imagination.‡ The spirituality of the soul? Helvetius ranks it in the number of hypotheses.§ Metaphysics? It is, according to d'Alembert, but a labyrinth of conjectures, and he swears that in its darkness there is nothing reasonable but skepticism.|| History? Boullanger makes it a collection of legends, a gallery of cabalistic figures, a written dream.¶ Do they believe in the personages of antiquity, in those of the primitive church? It is an error; they are chimerical beings, and in their very nature even the ingenious and

* *Memoires de Diderot*, Letter 153, a Mademoiselle Voland, t. 24. Edit. Brière.

† *Memoires de Morellet*, t. 1. p. 131, et suiv.

‡ *Lettres de Thrasybule a Leusippe*, t. 4. des *Œuvres de Freret*, p. 82 et 96. This work, attributed to Freret, appears to belong to Levesque de Burigny, one of the friends of Madame Geoffrin.

§ *Helvetius de l'Esprit*, t. 1. p. 125, 126.

|| *D'Alembert a Voltaire, Correspondance*, t. 22. p. 190.

¶ *L'antiquité dévoilée*, passim.

learned Boullanger maintains that he has discovered the secret of the life which is attributed to them. The existence of Saint Peter is but a fiction borrowed from the tradition of the ancient Janus, accompanied by the symbolical cock and holding the keys of the gates of the year, as the chief of the apostles holds the keys which open the gates of heaven.* Pilate instead of being the judge who wished to absolve Jesus Christ, is but an imaginary magistrate; what did I say? he is but a Hebrew word, a preterite of the verb signifying, *he who has judged*. Others contested the universal deluge, and calculated that it would require twenty times as much water as the seas could hold to submerge the globe. Some demanded with irony how the earth could be covered with innumerable inhabitants in two or three hundred years after the time of Noah,† and if human fecundity was ever capable of producing in so short a time sixty billions of inhabitants, as a certain Jesuit, who created populations by the *stroke of his pen* assured us. In this universal effort at demolition, they were regardless of the doctrines, miracles and mysteries of christianity, and it was with a tone of triumph that Diderot repeated those words of a Gascon gentleman,—“What is then that God, who made God die to appease God.”‡

We have not yet named one of the finest and boldest geniuses of the 18th century, Buffon. It is, because he kept willingly aside on account of the danger, and from gravity. But he none the less served the philosophical movement directed against the old beliefs, and the religious tradition, when he composed, by means of eloquent conjectures, his *Theory of the Earth*. Must we admit, as he supposed, that the earth was but a fragment of the sun, detached formerly from that star by the shock of a comet; that the ocean had at different times sojourned upon our continent; that it was currents of the sea which had dug out the valleys, and raised the hills; that there were formerly animals whose species is not found now, but whose existence is attested by the fossil bones of extraordinary size and form which are seen in Siberia, Canada and Ireland? Must we explain, with him,§ the generation of human beings by the hypothesis of organized, indestructible molecules always active and spontaneously fruitful? All this evidently contradicted the text of Scripture, gave the lie to the narration of Moses, and even induced us to think, that this earth, fallen from the sun, could not have passed through the solemnities of the creation recounted by the book of Genesis. The priests were not deceived. The first volume of *the Natural History*, containing *the Theory of the Earth*, appeared in 1749, and in the month of August, 1750, fourteen propositions, extracted from the work, were laid before the Sorbonne. It was about to fulminate; Buffon avoided the storm by protesting his submission to revealed truths, and his respect for the Scriptures.|| But the blow was struck, and they were terrible blows which such hands struck.

* See the curious *Dissertation sur Saint Pierre*, t. 6., des *Œuvres de Boullanger*, p. 177, et suiv.

† D'abbé Lenglet plan of subscription for a second edition of *la Methode pour Etudier l'histoire*. ‡ Additions aux *Pensées Philosophiques*, t. 1., des *Œuvres*, p. 252.

§ In *Ces Epoque de la nature*.

|| Picot, *Memoires pour Servir a l'histoire Ecclesiastique pendant le 18e. Siecle*, t. 2, p. 240 et 241.

If now we embrace the ensemble of the philosophic movement which has been recalled, and wish to know its last word, a man has said it ; it is Helvetius, whether he hastened to seat himself at the table of Holbach or whether he assembled the philosophers at his own, Helvetius had but one ambition, the ambition of intellect. Since Voltaire had gracefully surnamed him Atticus, the elegant farmer general burned to resemble the Roman financier otherwise than by his wealth, and was very greedy of glory. Incapable moreover of burthening the unfortunate, he loved better to offer his purse to men of letters, than to draw into it from that of a poor peasant. He had abandoned the finances for philosophy, and was impatient to make a book worthy of remaining. He did it, and how ? Whilst the philosophers invited by him abandon themselves to their ordinary discussions, the silent and cool amphitryon is attentive to their smallest words, was observing, ready, as he himself has said, to *hunt ideas*.* Not a truth, not an error escapes that he does not draw to himself ; he seizes upon traits, new views, paradoxes as they fly, and immediately inscribes them in the register of his memory. If a doubt torments him, he launches at once into the discussion,† in the midst of the heated and struggling guests, very sure that some sparks will scintillate from the bubbling fancy of Diderot, or the sagacity of Suard, or the prodigious memory of Baron Holbach, or the thought of that abbé Galiani, who was always *lively, active, full of reason and pleasantry*.‡ Well, what do we see springing from these conversations of the philosophers, listened to, registered, analyzed, summed up by Helvetius ? What is the result of these opposing opinions ? The book *de l'Esprit*. And what is this book ? The very code of individualism, the theory of *myself*. Let us not forget that Helvetius had a generous soul and virtues which refuted his doctrine. So true is it that it was the secret of the school he gave up and not his own. So true is it that his word was here but an echo.

There is no one then, according to Helvetius, who is not the centre and the pivot of every thing ; our ideas, our very judgments are but sensations, and our memory is but a continued sensation ; we only admire and pursue our own image in another ; our passions have but one source, physical sensibility, they are reduced to love of pleasure and fear of pain ; finally, personal interest is the only motive for our actions, to which society gives the name of virtues and vices as it derives advantage, or suffers evil from them.

Personal interest ! Is it not its empire which builds up even the kingdoms of the imagination ? Unperceived each other, it is it which fills the age of our illusions with sweet phantoms, and which sketches the country of our reveries ; "a gallant woman who was looking at the moon, thought she saw at the end of her telescope only happy lovers leaning against each other."§ In urging his demonstration to the last limits, Helvetius pleased himself with establishing that this law of personal interest rules despotically all organized beings, from the noblest of men

* Garat, *Memoires sur M. Suard*, t. 1. p. 229 et 230.

† *Memoires de Marmontel*, t. 2. p. 116.

‡ *Corres. de Voltaire*, lettre à Madame d'Epinal, t. 25. p. 251.

§ *De l'Esprit*, t. 1. chap. 2, p. 137.

to the vilest of animals, and formed the sole and invariable basis of judgments and instincts. Do not the insects which live in the pulp of the grass, regard with horror the sheep which pastures on the plains, and which we have made the emblem of mildness? If we could understand their language, would we not hear them exclaiming, "Fly from that voracious animal whose jaws swallow up both us and our cities. Why does it not take example from the lion and the tiger? These benevolent animals do not destroy our habitations, do not make a repast on our blood; just avengers of crime, they punish on the sheep the cruelties which the sheep commits on us."^{*}

Thus in the book of Helvetius the absolute was banished from the world. Virtue, truth, devotion, heroism, intellect, genius, every thing was relative, and each one judging of every thing but by himself alone, society fell into dissolution.

There is in this famous book a crowd of fine observations and ingenious comparisons, and Helvetius appeared even to go to meet objections when he said, "Virtue consists in reconciling one's own interest with the general interest." Yes, doubtless, virtue would be but that glorious harmony in a social state, perfect enough to suppress the necessity of the sacrifice, but when Cæsar trampled upon Roman liberty, could Cato protest otherwise than by the generous forgetfulness of his private interest, that is, by tearing out his own bowels? Is it not a puerile subtlety to maintain that those have in view their personal interest, who nobly enamored of a true idea, proclaim it with an intrepid heart in an age which rejects it; and do not hesitate to call upon themselves injury, calumny, persecution, sometimes an ignominious death?

We have said it, we must repeat it; the theory of *myself*, the code of individualism, behold what was and what must be a book inspired by the discussions of the philosophers of the eighteenth century. But let us add, that in their honest candor, they were alarmed at the bearing of their doctrines thus presented and completed. Unwilling to avow that such were the logical consequences of their principles, they refused to recognize themselves in the mirror which Helvetius boldly held up before their eyes. Voltaire grumbled,[†] and the philosophers treated a work, which was but the quintessence of their conversations, as paradoxical.

One voice was, however, raised, so masculine and strong, that it drowned all the noise of the eighteenth century. One single man was seen to throw himself suddenly across the movement which was sweeping society on; and it was a poor child from Geneva, who had been a vagabond, a beggar and lackey. Immortal and unfortunate Jean-Jacques, when, after having wandered from village to village, forgetting his misery in his reveries, he arrived at the door of Madame de Warens, and trembled, without avowing it to himself, at not having obtained the morsel of bread which had been promised and expected, who would have said to him, that he would have one day possessed, with the pen in his hand, that impetuous eloquence, by which harangues from the tribune intoxicate the multitude; that one day he would have enjoyed the glory

^{*} De l'Esprit, t. 1. chap. 2, p. 184. [†] Sarat Memoires sur M. Suard. t. 1. liv. 3. p. 217.

of rendering Voltaire jealous; that he would force his age to hesitate, for a moment at least, between himself and so many renowned philosophers; that his book would afterwards become the catechism from whence tranquil natures would draw the strength to give birth to and rule the agitation of the world?

How did all this contrast in Rousseau with the spirit of his times? They exalted reason which divides, he commanded feeling which draws together and unites.* In the midst of the apostles of individualism, he thought of the Nazarene who preached fraternity, and the holiness of the gospel spoke to his heart. Rousseau was not like Voltaire, a deist by an effort of the mind, but through the abundance of feeling. He never forgot the joys he owed to his imagination, a present from heaven. In the Pays de Vaud, on the shores of the lake of Geneva, though so poor and abandoned, he had felt happy in being a poet, and nothing more was necessary than that his softened and grateful soul should mount easily towards God. Nothing suited Rousseau in the philosophy of the Encyclopedists; neither the skeptical serenity of D'Alembert; nor that cold statue of Cordillac, which was awakened to life by sensation; nor that system of the fermentation of organs by which Diderot pretended to explain the mystery of thought, nor that void which atheism left in the universe and man.

Jean-Jacques attacked, then, the philosophy of his time, but in the name of the future, for the philosophers formed a formidable league, rationalism only dividing them on a question of affirmation, and serving as a bond for them to deny and destroy. They governed, moreover, public opinion; they governed it by means of books, the theatre, poetry, in a word, by intellect.

It was necessary to decry their great means of action, science and the belles-lettres; Rousseau attempted it, and his first *discourse* decided his life. He did not, in this discourse, combat this or that philosopher, or this or that system; generalizing his attacks with the greatest boldness, he encountered intellect itself on the throne of public opinion on which it had mounted; he demanded an account from it of the manner in which it exercised its power; he reproached it for having only used books for the propagation of falsehood, for having corrupted the morals of the arts, for having usurped the place of the estimable with pompous and vain harangues, and rising in his revolt until he found the aristocracy of thought illegitimate, he denounced, to the indignation of the people,† the inequality introduced among men by the distinction of talents and the debasement of virtues.‡

The trouble and astonishment in the republic of letters were extreme; this was what Rousseau had hoped for. The anathema which he hurled upon sciences and the arts, could not have been intended by him but as a bold and brilliant system of tactics. He redoubled it in his letter to d'Alembert *on shows*. The minds of men were then agitated by these unexpected paradoxes; the philosophers perceived that he made his attack

* *Emile*, t. 3. des *Œuvres Complètes*, p. 415. Edit. Armand Aubrée.

† *Ibid.* p. 472. Profession de foi du Vicaire Savoyard, p. 472.

‡ *Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts*, t. 1. p. 28.

on the very centre of their empire, and they prepared to overwhelm him with their vengeance. War was declared, and Jean-Jacques sustained it by opposing the philosophy of unity to the philosophy of individualism. He was to be precursor of modern socialism; it was his misfortune and his glory.

But had not Rousseau, in a discourse admirable for its eloquence and passion, celebrated the virtues and splendors of savage life to the discredit of the social state? Having rules of education to draw up, had he not instructed his pupil to avoid intercourse with his kind? . . . Stop.

Molière, the first of thinkers and of poets, composed a piece in the seventeenth century, which will remain as one of the most solemn and pathetic protests which has ever resounded through the world. He brings upon the scene the struggle of great minds against a society which treats their wisdom as folly, the struggle of great souls against a society to which their elevation appears to be but imbecility. Molière called the hero of this sublime, despairing, powerless struggle, a comedy for past generations, a tragedy for future, the *Misanthrope*; but this *Misanthrope* he exhibited as rude and tender, of a violent freedom, and somewhat stormy fierceness, and feeble nevertheless as an infant in matters of the heart, affecting to hate men, yet in reality inconsolable at not having them sincere and virtuous to love. The *Misanthrope* of Molière in the eighteenth century was Rousseau, in whom hatred sprang not from embittered love, but from startled tenderness.

What! will you take him at his word, him, *the most sociable of human beings*,* when he shall contrast the rude but independent existence of the man of the woods with the softness of civilized societies, their hypocritical politeness, and the thousand forms of their slavery? Do you not see what malediction is concealed within the envelope of this new paradox? Do you not perceive that this is irony after the fashion of Pascal? Is this vehement delirium any thing but the natural exaggeration of passionate truth?

If we are now asked why in *Emile*, Rousseau turned his attention to private instead of public and social education, why he wished to make of his pupil *an abstract man*,† and to teach him *simply the trade of living*,‡ he has himself told us the reason. "The public institution no longer exists, because where there is no more a country, there can be no more citizens."§ And he had another motive, whose secret he has also allowed to escape. He believed, he knew society to be on the eve of a profound and unexampled revolution.|| Through one of those intuitions familiar to genius, he already saw Europe upside down, ranks confounded, the nobles in flight and exile, and the rich reduced to indigence. He judged then "in view of the mobility of human things, and of the unquiet and restless spirit of the age,¶ that *Emile* was to be educated for a state of general dissolution and war, and not for that of association and peace. Yes, that his pupil was to learn to brave misery, to live, if necessary, in the frosts of Iceland, or on the burning rock of Malta; for the hour was

* *Reveries du Promeneur Solitaire*, the first promenade.

† *Emile*, t. I. des *Œuvres Complètes*, liv. I. p. 22.

§ *Ibid.* p. 19 et 20.

|| *Ibid.* liv. 3, in a note.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 21.

¶ *Ibid.* p. 22.

coming in which the science of it would be truly necessary. To teach Emile to be a citizen? There was *then* something more pressing to teach him; to teach him to be a man; and considered under this aspect with what an imposing character is the book of Emile clothed. What lofty melancholy in the instruction given and received in the noise of those prophetic words, the revolution is approaching. What an accusation against the doctrine which threatened to prevail, against that system of private and exceptional education adopted and recommended by this alone, that the time of public education was no longer, or was still very remote.

Rousseau moreover separated in a definite manner whatever there was in Emile distinguishing the cause of the past from that of the present.

And never had imagination clothed the demonstration of the truths which serve as a moral bond for the scattered members of the human family with such vivid coloring. He showed the humble Savoyard vicar, whom he made a judge of the philosophers of the time, upon a hill, as was formerly the beloved disciple of Socrates upon the promontory of Sunium; and there, on a beautiful summer day, by the rays of the rising sun, in the centre of a landscape crowned in the distance by the chain of the Alps, he lent to the man of peace, a language in which the christian unction of John Huss was united with the grave eloquence of Plato. It was now no longer the solitary pride of REASON which was invoked; Jean-Jacques abjured most strongly the age of reason to bend before the authority of FEELING. I perceive that the faculty of comparing impressions which come to me from without has its roots in myself; I am then not a slave to the external world. In the midst of the delight into which the sight of the universe plunges me, I perceive the presence of the invisible ordainer of the worlds; I must then bear witness to and adore that unknown being from whom the very laws of attraction spring, "and who launches the planets upon the tangent of their orbits."* I feel that I have a principle of activity which I seek for in vain in matter, and the triumph of the wicked during life, points out to me immortality as the justification of God; I have then a soul, and it is immortal. I perceive that after having deliberated, I wish; I am then a free creature. If personal interest alone inspired my actions would my eyes have tears for remote misfortune, and would I be penetrated with admiration for the true heroes of past ages? No, I perceive then that my life is not for myself alone, it is for humanity. And now what can your subtle arguments do against the energy of my transports? What good will it do you to silence me, when a mute but indomitable protest will arise against you from the very depths of my being? You tire yourself in convincing me? I wish to be persuaded. Do you pretend to act upon my mind? See first, if you have power over my heart.

Behold the good priest, behold Jean-Jacques. His mission in a society about to be decomposed, was, to oppose to the exaggerated worship of reason which destroys groups, the worship of feeling, which forms and preserves them.

* Emile, liv. 4. p. 412.

Of all the notions of which the faith of Rousseau was composed there was not one which did not enter into that poetic and majestic doctrine of unity and fraternity.

If he believed, for example, in the existence of a God, it was not like Voltaire, from the desire of explaining the creation more logically, but from the need of reserving a protector for the weak and the oppressed ;* a protector through whom the balance would be established sooner or later, and whose justice was a guarantee against the eternity of oppression. Diderot, as afterwards Anarchasis Clootz, was urged on to atheism by the horror with which fanatics inspired him ; he preferred denying God to confessing him ferocious, and he refused to implore the sovereign model of terrestrial tyrants in him. But because they had a long time abused the notion of a God, by disfiguring it ; because the theology of the dark ages had dared to make God violent, vindictive, furious and implacable ; because despots had had the astonishing insolence to give their usurped splendor as a reflection of the divine light, and their iniquitous orders as so many echos of celestial commands, must the idea of despotism be therefore confounded with that of protection ? And could they not without denying God, define him otherwise than impious executioners had done ? This Rousseau thought, and this Robespierre was afterwards to think when he instituted the *fete of the Supreme Being*. Both partisans of a strong power when it was required to protect the weak and save the unfortunate from destruction, the author of the *Social Contract* and his disciple knew that the form of societies is the counter proof of their metaphysics and their theology. He understood that atheism consecrates disorder among men, by supposing anarchy in heaven.

There was still a feature necessary to finish the picture ; it is known that Jean-Jacques, notwithstanding the passionate admiration with which the gospel inspired him, did not admit a *revealed God*, that he was a deist. But even in his deism he held to his doctrine of unity, and the diversity of worships afflicted him. "Since people have taken it into their heads to make God speak, each of them has made him speak in his own fashion and made him say what he wished. If they had only listened to what God says to the heart of man, there would never have been but one religion upon earth."[†]

Such were the efforts of Rousseau, such was his philosophic mission. But he was in his century but the representative of the second half of ours. They read his books with avidity, praised them, but refused to follow his path. The *New Heloise* enchanted the young people and the women. At the voice of the preceptor of Emile domestic manners were modified, and thousands of small children were indebted to Rousseau for being suckled by their mothers. But Jean-Jacques did not gain other victories, until his works appeared upon the table of the committee of public safety.

Thus, his existence was filled up with grief, and condemned to that kind of torment which made from its folly, a continuation of the folly of

* See the letter of Rousseau to Deleyre, one of the friends of Diderot.

† Emile, liv. 4. p. 450.

Pascal. Now taking refuge at the Hermitage, now proscribed by France and Geneva, his two countries, now wandering through the noisy solitude of Paris, where he passed known and respected beneath the costume of an Armenian, though entirely a prey to his sad distrusts, Rousseau dragged on a languishing existence, and died daily in the isolation of his glory. Treated as impious by the parliament, and railed at by philosophical incredulity, the seizure of his person decreed by the grand chamber, censured by the Sorbonne, and denounced by the archbishop of Paris, whom he overwhelmed by his terrible *reply*; a butt for the multiplied injuries of Voltaire, on whom he avenged himself by subscribing for his statue,* inconsolable for the friendship of Diderot lost, and perhaps calumniated in the *confessions*, Jean-Jacques whose rare sensibility and unmeasured pride exhausted the bitterness of misfortunes, experienced them all. Then, if he were sometimes guilty, if he became unjust from injustices suffered or dreaded . . . let us read again his imperishable works, and let him be absolved by his misfortunes, which are the sanctity of his genius.

How different a destiny was that of Voltaire, sustained and carried on by the great current of the eighteenth century. He is absent, yet he fills France. From Ferney, he presides over the banquets of Helvetius, animates the encyclopedists to the combat, gives the tone to the French mind, and forces all Europe to live by his breath. From the time he made the masculine accents of Roman liberty resound, and showed there the *Tartufe with arms in his hand*,† the stage was his own. His verses are recited, his romances or his tales repeated everywhere; in his books which he dare not avow, they divine by his talent what his prudence foils; his mockery is inevitable; the number of his victims escapes calculation; and it appears as if nothing more were heard in his age, but the long and formidable burst of laughter for which he has given the signal. If he comes to Paris, it is not to conceal himself there like Rousseau, but to march there from ovation to ovation, and one night, after a representation of *Merope* to be embraced in the box of the wife of the Marshal de Villars, in the name, and amidst the applause of an idolatrous public. The enumeration of so many luminous writings as burgherism knows by heart, is not required here. Voltaire has led the triumph of the dominant class for almost an hundred years. Let us look back through history from the revolution to Louis the Fourteenth, it will be traversed, but by the life of Voltaire, a prodigious, and to the eighteenth century, an indispensable life.

Take Voltaire from the eighteenth century, and the victory of the philosophic army remains uncertain. Thanks to the perseverance of this facile genius, the encyclopedists had princes and kings for their auxiliaries in their war on the church. *Les Delices, Lausanne, Ferney* were the royal residences of philosophy. From thence went forth daily that correspondence which Voltaire carried on with sovereigns, his vain glorious fellows,‡ an immense labor with which his sparkling pen sported,

* Mussey Pathay, Hist. de la vie et des ouvrages de J. J. Rousseau, p. 325.

† Thus Voltaire called the Mahomet of his tragedy.

‡ "After having lived among Kings, I have made myself a king at home." *Memoires de Voltaire*, t. 2. edit. Delangle.

an incomparable diplomacy which ruled almost all the affairs of Europe, turned almost all crowned heads, and reduced lofty monarchs to become the courtiers of a new majesty which was called reason. Ministers of the foreign affairs of philosophy, Voltaire knew how to conquer alliances in different communions. An elegant flattery signed Voltaire, was as a moral investiture for the German princes who recognized in him a continuer of the work begun by the prophet of Wittemburg. Formerly they desired to be armed knights, now there was not a great person who was not desirous of being an armed philosopher, by receiving the alcade from the patriarch of Ferney. Why not?—Had not Voltaire seduced a pope, even a pope? Had not the pen which congratulated Catherine the Second on sending fifty thousand men into Poland, to establish there liberty of conscience, by a happy audacity dedicated *Mahomet* to Benedict the Fourteenth? Religious fanaticism attacked in France under the auspices of the Vatican. The sovereign pontiff, accepting the dedication of a tragedy at the time when Rousseau was fulminating his letter on *shows*—what of the already unforeseen, and what novelties! It might have been said, that the powers of the earth, having a presentiment of the storm, were hastening to allay the powers of the mind. At Moscow, the Empress of Russia was engrossed by the letters or the silence of Voltaire; at Fontainebleau, Christian the Seventh, King of Denmark, honored himself above Louis the Fifteenth, for having learned from Voltaire how to think; † Gustavus the Third solemnly renounced arbitrary power in the hope of being admired by the philosophers; ‡ Joseph the Second, like a true prince of the 18th century, meditated fierce edicts against the priests, and placed the arm of a Germanic Cæsar at the service of ideas. Was there not something truly providential in all that? Antiquity saw kings become schoolmasters; but it had never seen a small number of men of intellect keep school for kings.

Among these sovereigns how can we forget Frederick. Frederick might be represented as placed on the other side of the river which separates the old from the new world. So long as he remains upon the bank he is incontestably a great man, for he unites the different qualities which in former ages made illustrious kings; the genius of the warrior, the boldness of the taker of towns and provinces, the science of an administrator, the consistent will of a choice despot. But if he passes the river, he is immediately uncrowned; for the conqueror finds himself among philosophers who insult the spirit of conquest; the warrior among thinkers who have a horror of war; § the absolute monarch among writers who are breaking down tyranny. Frederick, in becoming a philosopher, thus placed himself in a false, almost impossible position; and nothing shows better the decisive influence of mind at that time, than the double and contradictory part imposed on the genius of the king of Prussia. Louis the Fifteenth, who, in his occupations about the future, only feared hell, and who thought himself absolved in advance

* Correspondance de Voltaire, t. 20. p. 80.

† Ibid. t. 21. p. 253.

‡ Ibid. à d'Alembert, "I admire Gustavus Third, etc." t. 25. p. 48.

§ See the Correspondance de Voltaire et de Frederic on the subject of the war, t. 6. p. 234,—t. 25. p. 449, 455, et. t. 26. p. 34.

from his irregularities provided he detested the philosophers,* was enabled to keep himself from the contagion. But the king of Prussia had too few prejudices and too much mind for that. Frederick, besides, like the most vulgar of heroes, was concerned about posterity. He doubted to excess the immortality of the soul, he doubted so as to call himself *San-Souci*, and to give to his favorite retreat the name invented by his pretended indifference; he did not cherish it the less in the philosophers, the friends of his glory;† he was ready to acknowledge the guilty congratulations which Voltaire addressed to him on the battle of Rosbach, one of our disasters;‡ it delighted him to know that whilst he was combatting France, French philosophers, the friends of Madame Geoffrin, were exchanging, grouped in a certain alley of the Thuilleries, their wishes for the prosperity of his reign and the success of his arms.§

No one is ignorant how Frederick, after having called Voltaire to his court in 1750, how, after having appointed him his chamberlain, given him one of his orders and a pension of twenty thousand francs,|| in 1752, preferred Maupertius to him, humiliated him, compelled him to fly, insulted him at Frankford by one of his myrmidons, and merited, from the outraged poet, the surname of Dionysius of Syracuse. But what mattered it; Frederick had need of the philosophers; he was serviceable to them, the compact was not long in being sealed anew, and it was after the adventure of Frankford, that Voltaire congratulated the conqueror of Rosbach.

We may judge by this sketch of the sacrifices, that the triumph of the philosopher was frequently at the expense of the dignity of the man. And it was not only towards kings that Voltaire exhibited an excess of suppleness, but it was also towards priests, those very priests whose empire he had sworn to ruin. At Ferney he was careful to go to mass, he communed, he built a church.¶ But he knew how to give such a polish of good taste and grace to those dishonorable acts of dissimulation, that they were advantageous to his part without weakening his character, and he was free to write gaily to his friends: "When one has the honor of receiving the holy bread at Easter, he can go about everywhere with an erect head."***

Nothing then was wanting to the philosophy of the eighteenth century to enable it to seize on society; neither the good qualities and defects of its chief, nor the ardor of disciples, nor powerful protectors, nor an attentive and sympathizing public.

It is scarcely necessary to speak of the adversaries with whom the philosophers had to combat, except Rousseau. What could men who knew how to resist only in the name of dead ideas do against a movement which swept even Jean-Jacques himself? What could Le Franc

* Manuscripts of the Duke de Choiseul cited by Saint Priest in his history of the Fall of the Jesuits.

† Correspondance de Voltaire a d'Alembert, t. 10. p. 95.

‡ "I thank you for the part you take in the happy chances which seconded me at the close of the campaign, when everything appeared lost." Correspondance de Voltaire. Frederick a Voltaire, t. 10. p. 197.

§ Memoires de Morellet, t. 1. p. 83.

|| Correspondance de Voltaire a Madame Denis, t. 7. p. 185.

¶ Correspondance de Voltaire, t. 13. p. 29. ** Ibid. a d'Alembert, p. 86.

de Pompignan with his discourse on his reception at the Academy do, Palissot with his injurious *Comedy of Modern Philosophers*, Madame du Deffant with her ill humor, the advocate Linguet with his journal, and even that Gilbert, so bitter in his misfortune and so tender, that he *could only appear one day and die*. And then it required no easy courage to face Voltaire, and every one trembled before the man who thus sketched the figure of Freron; "He joins the falsehoods of Cinon, to the style of Zoilus, to the impudence of Thersites, and the figure of Ragoten."* So that every thing contributed to aggrandize, to fortify the militant sovereignty of Voltaire, from the art of flattery to that of intimidation.

On the other side, the old beliefs were daily undermined by a crowd of works sprung from unknown pens, published under false names or attributed falsely to writers already dead. Holland, which had become a vast press for the use of the philosophical ideas, inundated Europe with anti-Christian books; *the Military Philosopher*, *the Doubts*, *Sacerdotal Imposture*, *Christianity Unveiled*, and the recommendation of Voltaire accompanied every production directed seriously against the church, its doctrines and its ministers. "It is a treasure," he wrote, speaking of the testament of the curate Meshier, "what reply, wretches that you are, to the testament of a priest who asks pardon of God for having been a Christian."† Frederick, in his turn, favored this indefatigable conspiracy of thought to the utmost. . . But not content with urging to the assault of the church, authors, whose fury his protection encouraged, he thought of destroying the convents in his kingdom, of secularizing the benefices, and turned a complaisant ear to that eulogy of Voltaire, "Your idea of attacking the Christian superstition through the monks, is that of a great captain."‡

We have already named the Baron de Holbach. He had long been a deist, and had even made efforts to bring the exalted Diderot into the same belief. One day meeting him in one of those workshops in which Diderot was studying the description of the arts and trades, Holbach showed him a machine whose admirable secrets betrayed the invisible genius of the workman who invented them, and he adjured his friend to salute the great workman of nature, he sought to move him, he besought him for God. Suddenly carried away by his emotion he drops on his knees, and bursting into tears, beseeches Diderot to renounce atheism; but in this strange contest Diderot triumphs and the deist rises an atheist.§ It was Holbach, who published in 1770, under the name of Mirabaud, the best reasoned and most complete code of atheism which had yet appeared.

The *System of Nature* forms an epoch in the eighteenth century. Atheism had until then escaped only in sallies; in the *System of Nature*, it was produced under a dogmatical and decisive form. Spinoza had, in the preceding century, denied the personal God of the Christians, but had substituted a system full of poetry and majesty for their doctrine. To make of God one, only, infinite substance, whose true attributes are

* Corres. de Voltaire a d'Alembert, t. 13. p. 87. † Ibid. t. 14. p. 197, et 203.

‡ Correspondance de Voltaire, t. 20. p. 9.

§ Garat, *Memoires sur M. Suard*, t. 1. p. 208, et suiv.

thought and matter, and of which finite beings are but modes, was not to create a void in the world, but was on the contrary to show the whole universe full of God. There was nothing of this kind in the *System of Nature*. Never had such ruins been heaped up with a calmer and more frightful serenity.

According to the *System of Nature*, man is a purely physical being, and what we call the moral man, is but this physical being considered under a certain point of view.* Man results from a collection of certain pieces of matter, endowed with particular properties, whose essence is to think, feel and have self motion.† Nature is on a grand scale, what man is on a small; this is the whole. Moisten flour with water, and shut up this mixture, you will have life;‡ place fire in contact with powder, you will have motion; matter then contains motion and life.§ The soul? It is a material organ. The passions? They are molecules indiscernible to the sight, and which are fermenting.|| Free will? Necessity confined within ourselves.¶ Immortality? It is a happy chimera. "Let us leave his vague hopes to the enthusiast, his fears by which his melancholy is nourished to the superstitious; but let hearts strengthened by reason no longer dread a death which shall destroy all feeling."**

This book, to which we shall return in the following chapter, consecrated to politics, caused an universal emotion. Imagination, noble hopes, the logic of sublime affections, the certainty of poets, whatever was reputed weakness was to be found in its pages, in which the enthusiasm of virtue nevertheless breathed, and in which Diderot was revealed. What philosophical rashness was still possible after so sombre and terrible a hymn sung to chance and annihilation? Frederick was troubled, philosopher though he was, and with the pen which Voltaire had taught him to handle, he refuted the *System of Nature*. Voltaire, no less alarmed, uttered one of those cries which his whole age heard. The division introduced into the philosophic camp shone in the eyes of all Europe.

Thus rationalism urged to extremes denounced itself; the intellectual anarchy became the great event of history.

But this reaction, animated moreover by the hostile exaggeration of the principle of authority, was advantageous to the cause of progress, and though divided they none the less reached their common enemy with their inevitable wrath.

"I see every thing rosy," said d'Alembert. What he saw was the company of Jesus dying a violent death, whilst the Jansenists were dying a natural death. The abolition of the Jesuits was not long in justifying the presentiments of d'Alembert, and it was a victory gained by the philosophy of the eighteenth century in its first campaign; for we must not confound the general causes of the fall of the Jesuits with the accidents which served to precipitate it.

* *System de la Nature*, t. 1. chap. 1. p. 16.

† Ibid. chap. 2. p. 38.

‡ Ibid. chap. 12. p. 276.

** Ibid. chap. 19. p. 330.

† Ibid. p. 25.

§ Ibid.

¶ Ibid. chap. 11. p. 247.

We are at first surprised when we remember where commenced the tottering of that high wall whose ruin Pascal had predicted. Who gave it the first blows? Perhaps a philosophical minister, a titled correspondent of Voltaire, a subscriber to the Cyclopaedia? No, by one of those singularities which are the sport of history, it happened that the first destroyer of the Jesuits was a friend to the holy Inquisition, the lofty Marquis de Pombal. He only detested in them an influence inopportune to his tyrannical power, and an attempt to assassinate the king of Portugal, was the pretext which he used to strike them. It was then but a political execution on his part, and he was careful to explain it before Europe, in the manifestos in which he appeared to refuse to philosophers the glory of having armed him. But as he had tarnished his triumph by his cruelty, his declarations were advantageous to philosophy, which thus enjoyed the result, without having the odium of the means imputed to it. Europe learned with horror, that in consequence of two pistol shots fired by some unknown person at Joseph the First, the lover of the Marchioness of Tavona, all the family of Donna Theresa had been enveloped almost at hazard, in a capital accusation, and had been judged by a tribunal of exception, subservient to the personal hatreds of the Portuguese minister; that Donna Eleonora Tavona had appeared on a scaffold erected facing the Tagus, with the cord around her neck, crucifix in hand, and dying by the hand of the executioner; that her husband, sons and several of her servants had perished in frightful torments, and that finally the Duke of Alveiro, fastened to the wheel and broken alive, had died in tortures, filling the place of punishment with dreadful groans.* Certainly philosophy should have been charmed that it was not rendered responsible for the expulsion of the Portuguese Jesuits, when it was associated with so much barbarity. Thus Voltaire, Diderot and d'Alembert hastened to mingle their voices in the cry of reprobation which arose from all sides. Still the result was an acquisition to them, and when Voltaire was pitying the fate of father Malagrida, a poor old man thrown into prison and then under pretext of heresy, strangled and burned by the order of Pombal, he knew well that his pity would not save the Jesuits. In Portugal they happened to have a violent minister against them, but every where else they had the romance of *Candide* and philosophy against them. They were to fall like over-ripe fruit which is detached from the tree by the lightest wind. This was what happened. Driven in succession from Portugal by Joseph the First, from Spain by Charles the Third, from France by Madame de Pompadour and the Duke de Choiseul, it was only left for them to undergo the anathema of Rome, whose militia they were; and they did not escape this last misfortune, a shining testimony of the power of the new spirit. Scarcely had Ganganelli become Clement the Fourteenth, when three christian kings urged him to destroy the order of the Jesuits; Austria, even, lends itself to this commencement of a revolution, and it is the ambassadors of the great courts which carry the wish of the Encyclopedists to Rome. The Duke de Choiseul, who did not do the Jesuits the honor of hating them,

* Saint Priest, Histoire de la chute des Jesuites, p. 22.

had the witty inscience to choose a statesman celebrated for his small verses, the graceful Cardinal de Bernis, to aid in their destruction near the Vatican. The pope hesitated a long time, goverened by vague fear and black suspicions.* But his age drew him on. After having abused delays, temporizings, the artifices of his weaknesses, Ganginelli signed the famous brief *Dominus ac redemptor* which suppressed the Jesuits throughout the world.†

Sanganelli, though endowed with a strong constitution, fell into a sudden decline a few months afterwards. His strength abandoned him, sleep fled from him. The astonished ambassadors soon saw but a spectre before their eyes, whose looks betrayed a reason half lost. Concealed in the depths of his palace, afraid of himself, the unfortunate pontiff perceived that he was dying. When his hour came, his bones peeled off like the bark of a withered tree, and it was then remembered that when signing the brief for the suppression of the Jesuits, he had exclaimed, "this suppression will be my death."‡ The physicians spoke low, says an historian of our days, Saint Priest, the funeral preparations spoke loudly. His entrails broke the vase which held them; his nails fell off; his skin remained sticking to his dress; the hair of the corpse remained entire upon the velvet cushion. Rome and Europe believed him poisoned.

But it was not enough for the Encyclopedists to have beaten down the Jesuits; "what will it profit us to be delivered from the foxes," said Voltaire to La Chalotais, "if they give us up to the wolves?"§ The wolves were the Jansenists. Thus in writing the *history of the destruction of the Jesuits*, d'Alembert was careful how he broke against dead enemies the arms he needed against living ones. He changed the epitaph of the society of Jesus into a satire addressed to the *Jansenist rabble*.|| Intolerance, judicial cruelty, superstition, were monsters which the philosophers burned more than ever to destroy, as some new atrocity daily increased their ardor. Now it was the horrible and absurd condemnation of the Calvinist Calas, broken alive at Toulouse; now it was Sirven condemned, though innocent; now they learned that two young men, the Chevalier de la Barre and d'Etallonde, had been condemned by Jansenist judges at Abbeville, and the parliament of Paris to have their hands cut off, their tongues torn out with pincers, and finally to be burned alive, for not having taken off their hats at thirty paces from a procession and having struck the post of a crucifix.¶

The indignant philosophers declaimed against the barbarity of the parliaments, against the fanaticism of these *Busiris in Robes*. Voltaire in particular, was now so exasperated, that forgetting his ordinary mode of proceeding, railery, he let loose the genius of indignation. He felt that puns do not suit massacres. The scaffolds of Calas and la Barre,

* Saint Priest, *Histoire de la chute des Jesuites*, p. 147.

† The brief of Clement the Fourteenth was in 1773—Choiseul had then fallen, the Jesuits had been driven from France in 1762.

‡ Crétineau Joly, *Hist. de la Compagnie de Jesus*, t. 25. p. 393.

§ *Corres. de Voltaire*, t. 16. p. 37.

|| *Ibid.* d'Alembert a Voltaire, t. 11. p. 116.

¶ D'Etallonde escaped and was welcomed in his misfortune by Voltaire. La Barre was beheaded before being burned, according to the terms of his sentence.

rising up before his mind, he recapitulated these dark proceedings, outrages on reason, which he resented as so many personal injuries. To reinstate the Chevalier de la Barre, he wrote a *Relation* sparkling with the fire of his wrath, and in which the passion which the *Treatise on toleration* had inspired, reappeared. He fulminated demands against the judges of Abbeville and the parliament of Toulouse with an admirable violence. Perhaps we owe one of the benefits of the French revolution to the anathemas of Voltaire.* Secret judgments, condemnations without motive! "Can there be a more execrable tyranny than that of shedding blood at pleasure without giving a reason? Is it not usage? cry the judges. Ah, monsters, this must become the usage; you must account to men for the blood of men."†

The same year in which parliament was applying the punishment of parricides to the heedlessness of scholars, the treatise of the Italian Beccaria, on *crimes and punishments*, was received in Paris, and the Abbé Morellet, at the request of Malesherbes, translated into French, a work in which the Jansenist magistracy was to read its own dishonor. We may divine the impression produced by such a work in the midst of the recitals of the punishment of La Barre. Seven editions were exhausted in six months,—and Beccaria yielding to the prayers of his translator, left Milan to visit so many sympathetic readers at Paris. Helvetius, Madame Geoffrin, Baron d'Holbach, Malesherbes received him with distinction; but he, sombre and melancholy, his heart bleeding with a wound of love, could not conceal the dejection of his countenance, nor his deep distress from his hosts.‡ He left us, carrying away his grief, and bequeathing to us his meekness.

The true conquest by the philosophers of the eighteenth century, was tolerance in religious matters. By that, at least, they were united, they loved one another, they formed a school in despite of their continual differences. On leaving the noisy dinners, at which we have heard them disputing about the soul and God, they recalled their controversies with a smile, and the next day the firmest deist wrote to his adversary, "*Sir and dear atheist.*"§

We cannot open one of their books without being arrested by eloquent attacks on the inquisition and Calvin. In the *Religious Cruelty*, Boulanger spread out the scenes of carnage which soil the history of the church.|| Helvetius consecrated a chapter of the *Mind* to lashing persecution; he asked if christians, the children of the gospel, should recommence the sacrifices of paganism, and imitate Agamemnon dragging Iphigenia to the altar in honor of the gods.¶ The Abbé Raynal invoked the gentle virtues; he drew, in the *History of the two Indies*, a portrait of the ship owner, who treating the color of the negro as an heresy of nature, coldly calculated the receipts and expenses of his highway robbery.**

* "We place Voltaire in the catalogue of our saints," said a democrat, M. Thoré, and it is justice.

† Corres. de Voltaire au Comte d'Argental, t. 14. p. 340.

‡ Mémoires de l'Abbé Morellet, t. 1. p. 161.

§ Ibid. p. 132.

|| Boulanger, t. 6. des Œuvres, p. 271, 281, 299, etc.

¶ Chap. 24, Des Moyens, de perfection, ner la morale, t. 1. p. 390, 394.

** Raynal, Hist. Philosophique des deux Indes, t. 4. liv. 11. p. 171.

Morellet, before translating Beccaria, had issued the *Manual of the Inquisitors*, in which was read, that during the first half of the century, and in a single kingdom, the number of victims of the inquisition reached eleven thousand, of whom two thousand three hundred had perished in the flames.* Finally they amused themselves with collecting the austere but tender maxims of Vauvenergues, a bold captain, who charged at the head of his regiment, with a cane in his hand, and who, having become a moralist detested the executioner as much as he despised death.

It was not mere literary men who took the cause of toleration in hand. By it, the *Bélisaire* of Marmontel was raised to the importance of a philosophical romance, and if religious fanaticism was shown in *the Incas* in its true aspect, it was because Marmontel, the friend of Diderot, Raynal and Helvetius, could not avoid coloring his writings with the reflection of their conversations; and how could he moreover have furnished his literary contingency to the Encyclopedia, without gaining by it, like so many others, that heresy of toleration which had penetrated through Benedict the Fourteenth and Ganginelli, even into the councils of the Vatican?

Thus the school of the Encyclopedists, too disdainful of the authority of sentiments, exaggerated the importance of sensation, vaunted rationalism beyond bounds, and sought the moral dignity of the individual, only in his isolation. But it had the glory of wresting from superstition the power of oppressing men. Toleration was the fine side of rationalism; Rousseau, on this point, spoke like Voltaire, and from the bosom of a crisis in which all was exception and violence, we shall hear the most dreaded voice demand respect for human conscience.

CHAPTER II.

THE WAR ON ABSOLUTE KINGS—TRIUMPH OF INDIVIDUALISM IN POLITICS, OR THE CONSTITUTIONAL REGIME.

MONTESQUIEU.

Flcury had enervated the monarchy; Louis the Fifteenth dishonors it—Infamy of his amours—Madame de Pompadour is the royalty—Excesses and follies of absolute power—Absence of guarantees—Political inanity of the Parliaments; their insufficiency as a judicial authority—The Prevost of the Marshals—Oppression of the individual; necessity of enfranchising him—School of individualism in politics; Montesquieu; De Lolme;—Rival school; Jean-Jacques Rousseau—The ideas of Montesquieu prevail—All the thinkers united against absolute kings—Attacks of Holbach, Diderot, and Raynal—Last effort of absolute power; Maupeou destroys the parliaments—The new magistracy covered with ridicule by Beaumarchais—The political scene belongs to Burgherism.

WHILST the old religious society was thus crumbling beneath the redoubled blows of philosophy, what sight did political society present? and beneath the effort of what principle was it to perish in its turn?

* See l'Eloge de Morellet, par Lemontey t. 1, des memoires, p. 6.

After the tumult and convulsions of the regency, the kingdom was allowed to fall into lassitude at the feet of an old man, who was an enemy to distinction, tired of noise, mild, timid, and prodigiously egotistical. The Cardinal Fleury was scarcely installed, when he took the government of the first nation of the world, but as a quiet retreat for the calm of his old age. Naturally modest, and having in his veins but a little blood, which was beginning to congeal, he trembled at having to conduct a people moved by powerful desires. One mode alone was offered to him of living and dying in peace, and remaining at the same time minister; it was to take advantage of the momentary fatigue of France, and to render it humble, inert, languishing, like himself. This was his whole policy. Careful to cast the conceptions of genius into the shade, to remove vigorous minds or profound souls from public affairs, he had a horror of statesmen and state affairs. Wishing to avoid, at any price, adventures in matters of finance, he degraded the science of credit to avarice. Impatient of discouraging the national ambition, of diverting it from accidents, he abandoned our marine and the sea to the English. Such was his passion for small means and small things, that he pushed it to the bounds of treason. If, for example, in 1733, Stanislaus, the father of the queen, lost the throne to which the wishes that our swords served, called him, it was in consequence of the ill-will of Fleury, and of the insufficiency of his aid, perfidiously calculated; a felony which the diplomatic good fortune to which we owed Lorraine covered without absolving. So that Fleury recompensed himself for his impotence in hindering the war, by placing an obstacle in the way of the victory; so much did he fear for France, the transports of pride and the agitation of triumphs.

Louis the Fourteenth had, in his best years, known how to cover the absolute monarchy with a glittering mantle; under Fleury, the glory falling down, the skeleton was seen. To act and impose itself, is, moreover, one of the conditions of force. What is more ridiculous than to be every thing and disappear, to be all-powerful and do nothing?

He who wished to weaken the monarchy, needed an enervated monarch. Thanks to Fleury, Louis the Fifteenth, though twenty-two years of age, was but a voluptuous and timid child. The baseness of flatterers soon seeking an employment for the desires with which the young prince was secretly consumed, Fleury, instead of opposing, congratulated himself on it, confining his foresight to leading him to a choice, which would allow him to repose on its credit. Now there was, perhaps, at that time but a single one among the ladies of the court, whose soul, closed to ambition, was worthy to belong entirely to love; Fleury discovered her, and the artifices of his tolerance encouraged her.* It was Madame de Mailey, a noble woman, as tender as la Vallière, and still more unfortunate, since she had to mourn the ingratitude and cruelty of a sister, in the triumph of a rival.

Behold how was opened the long series of dissoluteness which marked the last days of the ancient monarchy of France. Four sisters† were

* *Memoires Historiques et Anecdotes sur la cour de France*, p. 20. 1803.
† *Soulavie, decadence de la Monarchie Française*, t. 3. p. 26. 1803.

seen led by turns into the arms of the master, disputing for the scandal of his embraces, and familiarizing him with incest.

And yet, after the death of Fleury, in 1744, when Louis the Fifteenth fell sick at Metz, strong grief shone forth, which his recovery changed into transports of joy. Indeed, an unexpected metamorphosis appeared to have been performed in him. He had armed his son a knight; he had hastened to a battle, which was the victory of Fontenoy, and he had renounced the languors of Versailles for the labors of a camp. His very weaknesses were then vaunted, Madame de Chateauroux having resumed the part of Agnes Sorel, and made heroism a condition of love.

But the life of Louis the Fifteenth only sparkled thus once. Madame de Chateauroux died, and soon afterwards the king inquired about a beautiful unknown, whom, when hunting in the forest of Senat, he had frequently met in the turns of the walks, audacious, provoking and seated upon an azure-colored phaeton. They named her, he wished to know her, and the Marchioness de Pompadour was not long in governing France.

She attained to this without a difficulty; Louis the Fifteenth asked only to be freed from the fatigue of wishing; not that he was blind to the dangers of inertness in an age of passion; endowed with a rare clear-sightedness, he had already discovered and pointed out the black cloud which was rising above the horizon. But on the other hand, he had measured with a cold and sure sagacity, the interval which separated him from the extreme danger; and what mattered the shipwreck of the royalty to him, provided he was not engulfed in it? Disdaining things because he despised men, he always carried to the council in which the future of his kingdom was discussed, an indolence in which his timidity masked his egotism. When he did not absent himself from it, he performed the part of an indifferent and silent spectator.

Madame de Pompadour took marvellous advantage of those dispositions. But the desire to rule to the end imposed on her a difficult task; *the king must be amused*, for there was a void in his thoughts, and his heart was burthened with ennui.* Wearied with the splendor of fêtes and his own grandeur, solitude had that disgraceful attraction for his wearied senses, which made an island, sequestered from the gaze of all, the beloved retreat of Tiberius; and in solitude, the leisure which pleasure left him, overwhelmed him. Through a painful and singular contradiction of his nature, he had a dread of death, and constantly evoked its image. One day, as he was passing a hill, surmounted by some crosses, he stopped suddenly, seized with sadness, and said to one of his suite, "Go and see if there is not a newly dug trench in that cemetery."† He was at once greedy of and disgusted with life; to aid him in living became the study of the favorite; and it was because she half succeeded in this that her power was boundless.

She overthrew and recomposed ministries. The Abbé Bernis reached power; he had been agreeable; he ceased to please; he fell. Full of

* L'Espion Anglais, t. 1. p. 12. 1779—Memoires de Madame du Hausset.

† Memoires de Madame du Hausset, p. 85.

resources as were the ready genius and boldness of the Duke de Choiseul, he would never have reached power, had he not been borne thither by the favorite. In vain did the gentry in whom the pride of ancient birth survived, murmur in a low voice at seeing the nobility at the feet of a cousin to a valet-de-chambre of the king, and the daughter of a clerk of bad character. What had survived in those gentlemen was pride without honor; the idol whom they insulted in private, they emulated to adore in public; and the favorite who guessed the injuriousness of their secret commentaries, chastised them by the disdain of her attitude. She received great lords, generals, prelates, princes of the blood at her toilette, and no one was permitted to seat himself in her presence.* It was her pleasure to be a lady of the palace to Maria Leczinska, the queen, and the scandal took place. It was a crime to offend her. The Count de Maurepas expiated the hardihood of an epigram by a long exile. Madame Sauvé was cast into the bastille, whose doors closed on her for ever, for a small note which she was supposed to have thrown into the cradle of the little Duke of Burgundy. The Chevalier de Ressengier was placed in an iron cage in which he could neither stand upright, nor stretch himself at length, at Mount Saint Michael, for some satirical verses, a rough draft of which was found in his house, and his punishment lasted seven years.†

Madame de Pompadour had, however, valuable qualities; she loved and cultivated the arts. She demanded pardon from posterity by the protection she frequently afforded to philosophy. She had inviolable attachments, and nothing could break her pact with the rude freshness and virtue of Quesnay. She was frequently surprised listening with a moved heart to the distant rumours from the public place and shedding tears over her power, when they cursed her. But she was condemned to furnish a memorable example to the world of all that the preservation of absolute power draws after it of ignominious necessities, and counsels of horrors.

There was a habitation at Versailles called the Hermitage. Its exterior announced a farm; within were but lascivious pictures, but charming retreats devoted to mystery, but pathways leading beneath dangerous shades. Madame de Pompadour fixed the theatre of her most skilful seductions there. It was there that dressed, one while as a queen, again as a milkmaid, and now as a nun,‡ she studied to reanimate the extinguished imagination of her lover by many apparently chance meetings, and a thousand unforeseen scenes. But where was she to stop in such ways? When she perceived that youth and health were abandoning her; when, after having sought in violent beverages and a murderous diet,§ new strength for seduction, she was compelled to avow to herself the uselessness of her efforts, she had recourse to means which were to conduct absolute power to exhaustion through shame.

Men run the risk of irritating princes by devoting themselves to their glory; it is much safer to rule them by devotion to their vices. The marchioness understood this, and it was by impure services that she

* *Memoires Historiques sur la cour de France*, p. 79.

† *Ibid.* p. 65, 74, et suiv.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 226.

§ *Memoires de Madame du Hausset*, p. 92.

determined to reattach her lover to a faded beauty and a health now rebellious to please. Concealing the vile side of her calculations beneath a poetic denial, she affected to rise above jealousy by passionate disinterestedness. "It is here," she said to the king, placing her hand upon her heart, "it is here that I wish you."* She then gave him and selected rivals for herself, queens of a night, whom she reserved the right to dethrone the next day. Portraits were placed before the king, for the purpose of exciting an ardent curiosity in him. They went so far as to paint the faces of young girls chastely framed in pious pictures† on the wainscotings of the laboratory of Maria Leczinska, and by which they pointed out to the king models kept in reserve. The Hermitage then became the *Parc-aux-Cerfs*. Then, from out of different manners and under modern names, reappeared that race of ancient freedmen who were believed to be lost, and whose venal infamy Tacitus had immortalized. Louis the Fifteenth had his paid ravishers commissioned to spy out, surprise and conduct to the den, where royal licentiousness awaited its prey, the victims whom misery sold, or who were stolen from the vigilance of families. What they chiefly pursued, was beauty united to the graces and innocence of budding puberty, innocence having the double advantage of allaying the disquiet of the favorite and of exciting more actively the desires of the master. He, either from a refinement in voluptuousness, or from true superstition, took pleasure, in the midst of his disorders, in practices of devotion, whose rules he imposed on the children given up to his caprice. He made them kneel down to say their prayers at the foot of the very couch on which he was about to educate them in debauchery.‡ Those who, not seeking to know their seducer, were content to serve him as a plaything, they contented themselves with separating from their children as soon as they became mothers; and covered with diamonds and enriched at the expense of the state, they married them to some being vile enough to espouse their precocious dishonor; but misfortune to those to whom the king took a fancy, or who showed a capability of pleasing him for a long time; at a signal from the alarmed favorite, the Bastile opened for them, and Louis the Fifteenth, signing the order for the arrest, had the baseness to punish the love he felt, or which he had inspired.§

It may be conceived what such dissoluteness was to cost. Louis the Fifteenth, who was exceedingly avaricious, who had suffered Madame de Mailly to ruin herself for him, who did not blush to amass by saving, penny by penny, in the midst of general distress, and who speculated in corn Louis the Fifteenth laughed over the treasures of the state, swallowed up by the largesses of the *Parc-aux-Cerfs*. Moderate writers said they amounted to an hundred millions.|| How besides was the scandal to be measured? The disorders of Louis the Fifteenth, too well known, spread abroad and encouraged corruption. Respectable families were troubled by the discovery of cynical hopes. The king of

* *Memoires de Madame du Hausset*, p. 104.

† *Memoires historiques sur la cour de France*, p. 231.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 238.

§ It was thus, for example, that Mademoiselle Tiercelin was sent to the Bastile.

|| *Lacretelle, Hist. de la France pendant le XVIII. siecle*, t. 3. p. 174.

France received such letters as renowned actors did at periods of famous depravity. Prostitution ran to meet him.

There was at first indignation, and it ended in disquiet. Rumors, renewed from another age, began to circulate among the people. They spoke of baths of human blood prescribed for Louis the Fifteenth as a last means of rekindling his life;* and, as if to accredit the frightful rumor, they strengthened themselves on the nature of absolute power, which is to dare every thing, when in perverse hands. Had not excesses already been committed which surpassed common bounds? Where were the laws to protect the citizens? Why should a prince, unbridled in his pleasures, stop at crimes, against which their only guarantee was their enormity? They were animated, they were excited by such discourses in believing in the most monstrous plots, and lo! Paris suddenly rose in tumult. It is done; children have been torn from their mothers; they have the proof of it; frightful circumstances are cited; strange words imprudently let drop by the ravishers are reported. The public places resound with furious clamors, with which are joined the groans of a crowd of mourning mothers. The hotel of the magistrate, the guardian of the city, was furiously invaded. The lieutenant of police, threatened with being murdered, was compelled to fly through the gardens. The outbreak was finally only dissipated by the brutal employment of force. But the force was not since decreased, in proportion as their anger was raised. A rising of vagabonds had been enough to cause this alarm, and what proof could be more striking of the deep distrust and hatred the people already felt?

Such was the royalty of Louis the Fifteenth at home; and its part abroad was on a level with so much opprobrium.

Let one figure to himself a prince served in the different courts of Europe by secret agents of admirable clear-sightedness; a prince holding in his hands, by means of a mysterious correspondence, all the threads of European policy; informed in advance of the plans formed against him by his enemies, and knowing much better than his own ministers the path to pursue to dispose to peace or cultivate war. This prince was Louis the Fifteenth. But yet, what mattered the destiny of the kingdom to him? What did he seek in this intimate and private correspondence which he carried on at great expense? A preservative against the ennui with which he was besieged, a vain sight, a force which would permit him to sally out of himself, an occasion to find the sagacity of his ministers at fault, to rally them on their ignorance, to strengthen himself in his disgust for men, and his contempt for human affairs. He was never happier than when, a witness of the disasters foreseen or announced by himself, without having taken the pains to prevent them, he could say to his councillors, "I was right." These were his diversions, and he used the humiliations, the calamities of his kingdom as mocking triumphs for his vanity.

Subjected to such a monarch, when there was no heir to Richelieu, what could France be? Our diplomacy became the laughing stock of

* Lacretelle, *Hist. de la France pendant le XVIII. siècle*, t. 3, p. 180.

Europe. A war had been undertaken in 1741, in the proud hope of wresting Germany from Maria Theresa and of restoring England to the race of Stuarts. What was the result obtained after many an heroic campaign, after the victory of Fontenoy? By the treaty of Aix la Chapelle, in 1748, we recognized Maria Theresa and proscribed Charles Edward.

It is known how lively and impassioned was the acclaim with which this unfortunate prince was hailed in France, when a privateer of Saint Malo landed him on our shores, mourning his betrayed courage, his lost hopes, his friends given up to abominable punishments, and his cause abandoned by a successor of Louis the Fourteenth. They were delighted in recalling his chivalric adventures, colored by his misfortune: they loved him in this generous country of France, because fortune had overwhelmed him without debasing him, because he had wandered under the weight of defeat over marshes and heaths, alone, hungry and covered with rags. The news was suddenly spread, that the Pretender had been arrested by an express order of Louis the Fifteenth, in the midst of Paris, at the opera, before an immense crowd; a sergeant of the guard threw him over as he stood on his defence, and he was conducted to Vincennes, insulted and a captive. There was a burst of indignation which we cannot paint from one end of the kingdom to the other. Voltaire, all-panegyrist as he was of Louis the Fifteenth, on learning of this arrest exclaimed, "Heavens! is it possible that the king suffered this affront and his glory to receive a spot which all the water in the Thames could not wash out?"* The royalty had nothing better to offer to France as a compensation for the scenes in the *Parc-aux-Cerfs*.

This was not all. In 1741 France armed for the advantage of Frederick the Second against Maria Theresa; in 1756 it arms for the advantage of Maria Theresa against Frederick the Second. Are you not astonished at so rapid a change, at such an attack on the policy followed by Henry the Fourth, Richelieu and Louis the Fourteenth. If they abandon that great plan of abasing the house of Austria; if they affront the warlike genius of Frederick the Second; if they carry beyond the Rhine all the forces of France, then attacked by England on the Mediterranean and the ocean, it is because the Marchioness of Pompadour so wishes. The consequences are known. The defeat of Rosbach; eighty millions of subsidies benevolently paid to Austria;† whole armies swallowed up in foolish expeditions; thirty-seven ships of the line and fifty frigates taken or destroyed by the English;‡ Canada definitely sacrificed by us to their greedy dictatorship, as well as Guadaloupe, Martinique, Tobago, Saint Vincent, Saint Lucie, our counting houses in Africa and India, . . . this was what the seven-years war produced—this was what the title of my *good friend* given by Maria Theresa to the mistress of an absolute monarch cost France.

Glory is an indispensable article in the science of despotism among a

* Œuvres de Voltaire, t. 7. p. 21. Edit. Delangle.

† Extracted from the private registries of Louis the Fifteenth, by Sonlavié, Hist. de la cadence de la Monarchie Française, t. 3. p. 273.

‡ Ibid. p. 227.

people not absolutely degraded, for glory and liberty being both absent together, there is too great a void. Under Louis the Fifteenth, France ended by wanting air; they labored to make an impossible situation for her.

We have recalled what Louis the Fifteenth did and with impunity; it is enough to say, that on the eve of being no longer able to do any thing, royalty could do every thing. Behold, in fact, a monarch, whose very debasement verifies his power. You ask if he has the right to constrain his subjects? His lusts are the despair or terror of mothers; if he has the right to exhaust the public treasury? he takes from it the dower of every virgin whom he has seduced; to strike at the liberty of citizens? his name at the bottom of four lines and the drawbridge of the Bastille rises; to create taxes at his caprice? he levies them for his personal account by speculating in famine; to appoint to employments? his mistress distributes them; to make peace or war? his mistress decides that.

What! did not the political constitution of the country offer any obstacles, any barrier to the encroachments of a power thus exercised? No, what royalty had before it, was not obstacles, it was dangers; it was not a barrier, it was an abyss.

But the *right of remonstrances*, with which the parliament since the time of Louis the Eleventh had been invested? A vain arm managed by hands destitute of vigor. The *remonstrances* could only be a rein provided they replied with force; they could not serve as a guarantee to public liberty, but on condition of being sustained by much boldness, by generous warmth, by a deep and systematic devotion to the cause of the people. Now let us not forget that the members of parliament were judges. And how can the warmth of the tribune be kindled in the judge? Political ardor agrees badly with that attachment to old forms, that worship of custom, that respect for established power, and those grave habits which characterize the magistracy, which are imposed on it. Liberty wishes to march onwards; it is the property of the magistracy to be seated.

The posts moreover having become venal and hereditary, the parliament had accustomed itself to regard the administration of society as a patrimony. One had bought or found in his family a domain which he intended to bequeath untouched to his children; and thus seen through the illusions of private interest, the public interest was pushed aside, it was extravagantly lessened, it was almost effaced.

That is little; the members of parliament were proud of the privilege of nobility which had been conferred on them. They did not consent to believe in the people, in burgherism. Their impotence was a part of their vanity.

Finally, there was every thing in the constitution of parliament to prohibit it from the honors of an active and truly serious part in political struggles. There were five chambers of *Inquests*, and two of *Requests*, in which were the young counsellors; then the *Great Chamber* into which they were only admitted by seniority, and in which the presidents *à mortier* were comprised. Then in the bosom of the parliament itself

the mettle of some was constantly combatted by the age and timid prudence of others. The *Great Chamber* weighed upon the *Inquests* with all the weight of experience, age, hierarchy and the respect which long services and austere manners command.

Thus, what actions mark the political part of parliament up to the eighteenth century?

Under Charles the Ninth, it approves, from weakness, not from conviction, of the assassination of Coligny, whose glorious corpse it had hung to the gallows of Montfaucon.

During the League, it adheres to the *Union* in a solemn manner, for the sole purpose of betraying it, and runs to prostrate itself before the *Bearnese conqueror*, after having proscribed him.*

Under Richelieu, we see it traversing Paris on foot to beg pardon, placing itself on its knees before Louis the Thirteenth, and submitting to the outrage of these harsh words; "I will send seven or eight of you into a regiment of musketeers, there to teach you obedience."†

During the Fronde, it was alarmed at finding itself one day all powerful, and it hastens to beseech those whom it has conquered to deliver it from the cares of its triumph.‡

Under Louis the Fourteenth, it is as dead.

Under the Regent, its creature and accomplice, it essays to raise its voice, and is immediately exiled to Pontoise. By whom? By Dubois, astonished that the magistrates resist him.

What proves well that the weakness of parliament as a political body sprung from the very nature of its functions and prerogatives, is, that it had, after all, two formidable, decisive means of causing itself to be respected; cessation of service and combined resignations. It made great use of them in latter times. Every one must feel how alarming a sudden interruption of the course of justice must be. What interests are moved thereby. What trouble it suddenly carried into civil relations, even, if the storm only arose in the restless crowd of clients. But the advocates took fire, and there is the power of speech to increase the tempests. The uproar soon increased; the people, without disturbing themselves about the cause of the quarrel, hurried into the movement; the women of the market, the amazons of the émeute, hastened to the van; it was but little matter to them, that the country was not declared to be in danger. From whence then did it arise that such a resource was vain? We have told it, and if we need a still more complete explanation, we can read in a memoir handed to the regent by the abbé Dubois.§

"What force can oppose the execution of the king's will? The parliaments? They can but remonstrate, and that is a grace they owe to your royal highness; the late king being extremely jealous of his power, having severely prohibited them from doing so; and if all their remonstrances ended, it does not please the king to retract or modify the law, they must register it. If, on the other hand, the parliament still refuses,

* See above the chapter on the League.

† Saint Aulaire, Hist. de la Fronde, Introduction, p. 24.

‡ See above the chapter on the Fronde.

§ Contained in l'introduction du Moniteur.

the monarch sends it ulterior orders. Then appear new remonstrances which savor of faction. The parliaments do not fail to make it known that they represent the people, that they are the props of the state, the guardians of the laws, the defenders of the country, with many other reasons of a like kind. Authority replies to this, by an order to register, adding that the officers of parliament are but officers of the king and not officers of France. The fire is gradually kindled in the parliament; factions are formed in it and they become agitated. It is then customary to hold a bed of justice to lead the gentlemen of the parliaments to the necessary point. If they submit at it, it is obedience, and that is all the greatest king in the world can desire. If they still resist on returning to their chambers, they either exile the most mutinous and the leaders of the factions, or else exile the whole body to Pontoise. Then the nobility and clergy, its natural enemies, are excited against it; they sing songs, they distribute pleasant and fugitive poetry, of which we know well the march and the results, which only occasion light emotions, produce no serious inconvenience, and the parliament is none the less exiled for having been disobedient. The young counsellors who control the body are then subdued by famine. The need they feel of living in Paris, the habits of pleasure, the custom of mistresses, command them imperiously to return to their fire-sides, their kept mistresses, their actual spouses. They then register, obey and return."

Such, as described by the penetrating and cynical genius of Dubois, was the mechanism of parliamentary resistances. Was it enough to constitute a regime of guarantees?

The truth is, the parliament never opposed any efficacious obstacle but to the enterprises of Rome and the ultra-montane part of the clergy, and it is in this relation that it aided the sway of burgherism; but its influence was a nullity against the excesses of the absolute monarchy. Its complaints only prevented the nation from sleeping too long in the silence of despotism; its protests, stifled by violence, formed a permanent and dramatic appeal to liberty; its pretensions to represent the States General urged it on to invoke their imposing phantom at distant intervals; and it kept the place of a revolution.

When liberty is not at the summit of a state, it is no where. Under the absolute monarchy the public interest floated about at chance; and the inanity of the political power of the parliaments, laid bare even that of their judicial power. If it were to punish the innocent, to save the guilty, to allow a favored person to gain an unjust suit, the king *evoked* the affair, that is to say, carried it before the *great council*, an exceptional and servile tribunal, placed under the control of the prince, to furnish means to elude the jurisdiction of the parliament.

By the side of the regular justice of the sovereign courts, the presidials, and the bailiffs, was another strangely irregular and savage; the prevostship of the marshals. Originally, the prevosts of the marshals had only cognizance of crimes committed in the train of armies; but how had their jurisdiction become extended. Vagabonds, soldiers, culprits, wandering robbers composed the crowd liable to the justice of the

prevost. And here there was no protecting form, no recourse, no delay; it was despotism on the highway.

Thus what violences, unfortunately too certain, too well attested by the continual remonstrances of the parliaments? Now it is travellers whom the horse patrol arrests under pretext of being vagabonds *on account of money found on them*;* now it is a young man, born an imbecile, whom they maltreat; judge, punish, imprison as a voluntary mute, because met not far from the place of his birth, he can neither explain himself nor reply.† In vain did the ordinance of 1670 prescribe to the prevotal judge to have his competency judged of by the nearest presidial;‡ the reclamations of the parliaments are there to prove that arbitrary power had then a life which ordinances had not.

Was justice but a vain name when royalty allowed itself to hand its enemies over to commissions chosen by itself, intoxicated with the desire of avenging it, and before which the prince himself appeared, like Louis the Thirteenth, as a witness to the charge?§

In degenerate Rome the emperors had not considered themselves freed from knowing those whom their unbounded power reached; to strike, they required to hate. In France before the revolution, a combination existed which rendered the prince unjust in advance, at chance, for the benefit of the caprices of another. Orders for arrest in which the name of the victim was left in blank, given as a present to favorites, to a mistress, is a kind of outrage which posterity will probably refuse to believe. They began by giving letters de cachet in blank, they ended by selling them; tyranny thus became an article of commerce.

To heighten the misfortune, this insolent contempt for the liberty and existence of citizens, soon descended from the acts of royalty to its ordinances, from its ordinances to its morals. Nothing, for example, was more odious, more alarming, than the spirit of criminal proceedings before the revolution. The rule was this, the certainty of repression was every thing, the guarantees due to the accused nothing. In accordance with a criminal ordinance passed under Louis the Fourteenth, the proceeding against an accused who was present might become an affair of twenty-four hours.|| A man accused of a crime was regarded as guilty. The magistrate, who should have been his judge, became at once his enemy.¶ And still the repression was always kept in the dark, as if society blushed at its justice. The hearing of the witnesses, the procedure, the confronting, the conducting on the part of the accusation, every thing was in secret.** Who would believe it? They feared so much to see the innocence of the accused shine out, that the king's attorney was prohibited from giving the motives of the prosecution.†† The judge had the right to allow counsel to the accused in matters of pecu-

* Remonstrances from the sovereign court of Lorraine, 25th of February, 1756, cited by Marrast and Dupont in l'Introduction aux fastes de la Revolution Francaise, p. 39.

† Ibid. ‡ Potherat de Thou, Recherches sur l'origin d'impot en France, p. 275.

§ Saint Aulaire, Hist. de la Fronde, Introduction.

|| Potherat de Thou, Recherches sur l'origin d'impot., p. 272.

¶ Commentaire sur le livre des Delits et des Peines, œuvres complètes de Voltaire, t. 39. p. 93. ** Ibid. p. 89.

†† Criminal ordinance, Titre 24. art. 3., cited by Potherat de Thou, p. 276.

lation, concussion, fraudulent bankruptcy, robberies by clerks or associates in matters of finance or banking, the substitution of a child, false coin, but for other crimes the ministry of an advocate was interdicted.* The more severe the penalty, it is evidently more important that the culpability should be well proved; the contrary took place. They measured out to the accused the means of establishing his innocence with more cruel parsimony, in nothing than when they asked for his head. If he fled, he was condemned by default, without his crime being proved.† The penal system was terrible. Society reserved to itself not to assure at need its vengeance by the penalty of death, until after they had been dishonored by torture.

If barbarity ruled in criminal matters, confusion worse confounded had the sway in civil affairs. And first as a judicious and learned writer‡ has well observed, there was, in the eighteenth century, a complete anomaly between the civil and commercial law. The laws concerning contracts, successions, personal estates, in a word all the connections which the civil law regulates bore the impress of feudality, whilst it was modern institutions which governed the commercial, the modern nation. From this arose a perpetual and fatal struggle between the contrary elements in the very depths of social order. What obstacles to commerce in a kingdom in which almost every suit raised a conflict of jurisdiction; in which a suitor was always at a loss to know whether his fortune depended on the parliaments, or the courts of aid, or the great council, or the courts of currency, or the intendancies, in a kingdom in fine, which, parallel with the Roman law received in a country of written law, counted sixty principal customs and three hundred partial legislations.§

A word sums up the situation of France, before '89: individual oppression.

The revolutionary effort of the thinkers tended, then, naturally to free the individual.

But there were two points of view for the question; must they annihilate all strength in power, or must they study to render strength in power benevolent and tutelary? Two political schools were formed, as two philosophical schools had been formed, and as we shall see in the following chapter, two economical schools form; there is the secret of the terrible struggles which were to spring from the very bowels of the revolution.

Here, and conspicuously, a great name presents itself—Montesquieu.

It would be unjust to forget, that in the region of renovating ideas Montesquieu had direct ancestors. He was not descended in a direct line, as has been so often said and repeated, from Bodin, from whom he only borrowed his views upon the influence of climates, but from Hottoman, Hubert Languet, from the author of the dialogue of *Archon et Politie*, from the protestant publicists of the sixteenth century.

* Titre 14. art. 8. de l'ordonnance criminelle.

† Commentaire sur le livre des Delits et des Peines, p. 90.

‡ Potherat de Thou, p. 265, et suiv.

§ Ibid. p. 268, et suiv.

Do not think that this chain of thinkers was broken completely, even during the seventeenth century, when every thing which did not resound of war and glory appears to have been but silence. Yes, even during the seventeenth century, the intellectual revolt continued to germinate and grow. *The sighs of enslaved France, which aspires for liberty*, is a title we are astonished to read at the head of a work bearing date the 16th of August, 1689. And who is the representative of the revolutionary tradition under Louis the Fourteenth? It is a prelate, a great lord, the oracle of the Dukes of Beauvilliers and Chevreuse, the candidate of the Jesuits for the ministry, the preceptor of an heir to the throne, it is a priest lightly stricken by ambition, but charming from his mildness and mystic grace, perhaps too tender: it is Fenelon.

Let us be careful, however; Fenelon was neither logically nor systematically revolutionary; he was so by starts, and his ideas sprung from the mobility of his inspirations. Now occupied with the abuses of power, he said to Telemachus, "Never undertake to embarrass commerce, to turn it according to your views. The prince should never take part in it from fear of thwarting it;"* now absorbed by the dangers of license, he exhibited wisdom under the features of Mentor, "by establishing magistrates to whom merchants should render account of their effects, their profits, their expenses, and their entire prices."†

There was no doubt he was too far advanced in the future when he wrote, "Each family in every class should be permitted to possess only as much land as is necessary to support the number of persons of whom it is composed."

No doubt, on the other hand, he was too much in the past when he complained of the fate of *true lords*, reduced to wait in ante-chambers, or to conceal their misery in the provinces;‡ when he gave the first rank, in his plan of Salentum, to those who had the *oldest and most illustrious nobility*;§ when he demanded that the inequality of the privileges of birth and condition should be even in a diversity of costume; a white garment, with a fringe of gold, to persons of the first rank, a yellow and white dress to the lowest of the people.||

Fenelon was noble;¶ he never forgot it sufficiently; but his opposition to absolute power, in the age of despotism, at Versailles, beneath the eyes of Louis the Fourteenth, none the less entitles him, therefore, to the grateful remembrance of the people. Excessive taxation, unjust division of the imposts, a taste for luxury, idolatry of gold, Fenelon exhibited much courage and dignity in attacking all the abuses under which the people suffered. He dared to remind the proudest of monarchs that there was another power in France besides his own; the States General, and another majesty than the prince; the nation. He dared to write the history of Louis the Fourteenth in this phrase: "The king, who cannot be a king alone, and who is only great through his people, gradually annihilates himself by the annihilation of the people from whom he derives his wealth and power."***

* *Telemaque*, liv. 3.

† *Ibid.* liv. 12.

‡ *Directions pour la Conscience d'un roi*, t. 6. des *Œuvres Complètes*, p. 354.

§ *Telemaque*, liv. 12. p. 278.

|| *Ibid.* p. 279.

¶ *Essai Historique sur Fenelon*, p. 5.

** *Telemaque*, liv. 12. p. 291.

A man worthy to be placed, after the Archbishop of Cambrary, among the precursors of the revolution, is the Abbé de Saint Pierre, a simple and intrepid soul, out of place among the disorders of the regency, a publicist full of sap, and who, being a bad writer, had the good fortune to be translated by Jean-Jacques. The regent having established as many councils as there were varieties of business to attend to, the Abbé Saint Pierre took up his pen to apologize for this new form of administration. But this was only the apparent end; the real one was higher and more remote. The *Polysynodie*, or *Plurality of Councils*, concealed a lively and noble protest against absolute power. He who has not the shoulders of a Hercules, and wishes to uphold the world, must expect to be crushed; then, according to the Abbé Saint Pierre, a despot, if he wishes to enjoy his power, and reconcile the empire of the gods with animal life, has nothing else to do than to keep for himself the true honors, idleness, by placing on others the duties to be fulfilled. "By this means," added the author, with bitter irony, "the lowest of men will hold peaceably and suitably the sceptre of the world."* "The wise man, if there can be one upon the throne, renounces empire or shares it. . . . But what the wise man would do has little connection with what princes will do."†

Such language appears to us, now, very simple; but to speak so in the time of the Abbé St. Pierre was a courageous and dangerous action. The author of the *Polysynodie* was accused of having failed in respect to the memory of Louis the Fourteenth, and the Academy drove him from its bosom as factious. He consoled himself by pursuing labors which he knew were useful to humanity, and which were not brilliant enough to induce persecution. The good abbé was besides so in advance of his period in his ideas, that he had no difficulty in obtaining the indulgence of the ignorant and the skeptical. How could they be disquieted more than an hundred years ago by a man who published a plan for a perpetual peace, and who, in the hope of rendering war for ever impossible, proposed to carry the quarrels of princes and people before a great European tribunal? Even Jean-Jacques Rousseau thought the plan too bold in the then state of Europe, and he pronounced it incapable of execution, while admiring it.‡ We have, however, seen this beautiful idea of a general arbitration applied in our days, though in an odious sense, and by potentates; we have had the holy alliance of kings; we are drawn on by a current which leads to the holy alliance of the people, and a near future will explain the judgment of Rousseau upon the plan of a perpetual peace: "This is a solid and sensible book, and it is important that it exists."§

We must press on; we must reach that president of the parliament of Bourdeaux, that Baron de la Brede and de Montesquieu, the true heir of the protestant publicists of the sixteenth century,|| the inspirer of

* *Polysynodie* of the Abbé Saint Pierre dans les *Œuvres Complètes* de J. J. Rousseau.

† *Ibid.*

‡ "If moral truth were ever demonstrated, it appears to me that it is the general and particular utility of this plan." *Jugement sur la paix perpétuelle*, par J. J. Rousseau.

§ *Ibid.*

|| See above, chap. 4. Book 1.

the labors of the constituent assembly, and whose influence impressed on our modern institutions, cannot be half accepted or half resisted. Celebrated, since 1721, by the *Persian letters*, an elegant and sensual satire, a philosophical skirmish, whilst awaiting the great battle, Montesquieu had since visited Venice, whose suspicious government alarmed him, Genoa, where his sojourn filled him with sadness, Florence, where he was surprised to see the first minister of the reigning prince seated before his door on a wooden seat and wearing a straw hat, and finally London, from whence he brought back with him a chapter of *the Spirit of the Laws*, with which famous dates are invincibly united; 1789 and 1830.

It is not force which leads the world, though it may apparently do so; it is thought and history is made by books. But their action is more or less immediate; that of the *Spirit of the Laws* was direct and decisive. To expose then, merely, the political doctrines which spring from this work would not be sufficient; and it is not until after having appreciated them, that we shall be in a condition to comprehend well the facts which have sprung from them.

Distinguishing three kinds of government, the republican,* the monarchical and the despotic, Montesquieu gives as a principle or spring, to the first, virtue; to the second, honor; to the third, fear.

Thus, according to Montesquieu, there is no possible democracy without much virtue, and lest any mistake should be made about his thought he takes care to say, "That it does not signify that, in a certain republic, one may be virtuous, but that he ought to be so."† The maxim has since made its fortune; adopted at first without examination, it has ended by being protected against examination by its very triviality, and the partisans of the constitutional regime have exclaimed triumphantly to their adversaries "you wish to be republicans, and you do not know how to be virtuous."

But in making virtue the indispensable spring of democratic states, has not Montesquieu confounded the principle with the result, and given the crowning piece as a base for the edifice?

In a social point of view, virtue consists in the love a man has for himself, and that which he owes to his kind; it is to the moral world what order is to the physical. Now the democratic regime tends essentially to reconcile the individual and the social sentiment. It renders homage to the first by admitting the representation of each interest, to the second by submitting all interests to the law of equality. Never separating the man from the citizen, and that which returns to the individual from that which society claims, democracies say, "Thou shalt die for thy land, because it is thy property; for thy fellow citizens, because they are thy brethren; for thy country, because it is thy mother."

Monarchies, on the contrary, reposing upon a principle of exclusion, because the privilege of an individual leads to that of many, are obliged

* Montesquieu comprehends under this word democracies and aristocracies. "The republican government, he says, is that in which the whole people or only a part of them, have the sovereign power." *Esprit des lois*, liv. 2. chap. 1.

† Ibid. liv. 3. chap. 11.

to create a false social interest, for the advantage of which a crowd of private interest is hidden or crushed. The monarchical regime then places society in a perpetual contradiction to human nature; those whom it excludes, it condemns to isolation; it makes them rebels or cowards. In a constitutional monarchy a man says, "the country;" in a democracy the citizen says, "my country."

But because virtue is more easily practicable, and more common in a democratic state, must we conclude with Montesquieu, that it is more necessary to it? Because virtue is the natural result of democratic institutions, must we conclude that it is a condition of them?

Democracies, whose characteristic trait is *admissibility*, impose evidently fewer sacrifices on the mass of the citizens, and can be maintained at less expense, if they are well regulated, than monarchies, whose characteristic trait is *exclusion*; it is surprising that Montesquieu did not perceive this point. Where then will there be resignation, modesty in desires, an absolute respect for established order, a determination to suffer rather than trouble the state, if it is not, where institutions demand respect from those whom they abase, love from those whom they repel, a voluntary obedience from those whom they despoil?

It is not true notwithstanding what Montesquieu thinks about it, that ambition has dangers in democracies unknown to monarchical governments. Ambitions are less violent in a democracy, because they have an established and regular course. The principle of *admissibility*, by permitting, hope in them, removes them from violence. The constantly active intervention of opinion in the life of citizens, interdicts to them the baseness of intrigue, and the hope of success reaches them from that deep pride which is mingled with vast desires.

In a monarchy, it is a misfortune to the government, if ambition is co-extensive with information, and if it is encountered amid a crowd of proud and strong souls. For soon leaping the ditch opposed to lawful ambitions and unable to follow legal ways calmly, they will spring raging into revolutionary paths, they will go, taking with them on their passage all inconsolable griefs, all the hatreds which await . . . and what will happen? They have attacked the institutions by speech, they will attack them by the sword; the opposition rises to an outbreak; the outbreak grows into an insurrection, and the day will come in which the baffled royalties will have to choose between exile and the scaffold.

Montesquieu assures us, "that much probity is not required for a monarchical or despotic government to sustain itself; the force of the laws in the one, the constantly upraised arm of the prince in the other, regulate and restrain every thing."*

The force of the laws! But it is much weaker in a monarchy than a democracy. How could the laws have a great moral force, when the citizens are enabled to see in them the interest of a man or a caste, imposing itself on the destinies of a whole people? And how would they not be on the contrary environed with splendor and majesty, when they represented the will of all guaranteed by the power of all? In a democracy the state lowers rebellious heads with an imposing authority; for

* *Esprit des lois*, t. 1. liv. 3. chap. 3.

its sword is not raised, but in the name of social order, and its severity is called national justice, never private vengeance. What resemblance is there in a monarchy? If the power of a king places itself under the safe guard of swords, it is in his own name that he defends himself; it is in the egotistical feeling of his own preservation, that he seems to exhaust the courage of the strife; and if he triumphs, he dishonors himself.

Montesquieu has drawn an eloquent picture of the effects of corruption in republics; is corruption in monarchies more difficult to be introduced, or less fatal? Is it not around thrones, among so many domestic ambitions united beneath the shade of an immovable majesty, that corruption presents itself, armed with its most learned caresses, its softest seductions? Has not corruption become a science in courts? A limited monarchy will always find its Walpole, and will have but little to do to degenerate into an absolute monarchy.

Republican souls may, beyond doubt, be bent to servitude, but not without long efforts or prodigious temptations. Even after Rome had descended by perfidious paths beneath the dictatorship of Sylla, it was necessary to employ the wealth of the conquered world in the purchase of liberty. But in the ordinary course a man cannot, like Pompey, make a present of a circus to the multitudes, or like Lucullus serve up the treasures of an opulent kingdom to the guests of a night.

What matters the nature of the institutions as to the effects of public depravity in what concerns the independence of states? Montesquieu cites the example of Athens, and it is very true it had lost its ancient virtue when Philip conquered it. If it had exhausted in pleasures the remains of that blood formerly lavished in heroic battles; if a nation of poets, it no longer heard the name of Themistocles in the murmurs of the waves of Salamis; if, a nation of warriors, it no longer experienced magnanimous thrills at the voice of Demosthenes, this degeneracy arose from causes entirely foreign to the nature of political institutions. Would Athens, having reached under the government of a monarch the degree of corruption which destroyed it under a republican government, have better defended its ancient independence and glory? Would monarchy have rendered those victorious at Cheronea, who were unwilling that the money destined for the theatres should be diverted to purposes of war?

When Montesquieu is seriously studied, one is astonished to find him at once so affirmatory and so weak. His pretended depth is upon the surface; it is but a disguise for his errors.

It is seen how slightly founded were the political predilections of Montesquieu. But the sight of England dazzled him; and more fortunate than the publicists of the sixteenth century, whose tradition he continued, he was destined to introduce into France, what they had but admired at a distance and announced.* Cast your eyes upon *the Spirit of the Laws*; you will find described in it, wheel by wheel, all the present political mechanism; an elective assembly armed with the right of voting the taxes, and sharing the law-making power with an assembly of an aristocratical nature; in front, an hereditary king, sacred, inviolable, charged

* See above the chapter called Protestant Publicists of the sixteenth century.

with the execution of the laws and unable to refuse his assent to them ; below and by the side of a permanent magistracy whose judicial functions are not confounded with the power which makes the laws, nor with that which executes them, temporary judges, drawn from the body of the nation, and in whom the accused recognizes his peers.*

When Montesquieu proposed to France the adoption of a political system long established in England, was there an analogy of situation between the two countries which would have authorized such a borrowing on our part ?

In England, the royalty, the house of lords and the house of commons, were never but three functions, but three different manifestations of one power, that of the aristocracy ; Montesquieu did not remark this. He thought that the English constitution reposed on the play of three powers naturally and necessarily rivals ; and he did not suspect, that if these three pretended powers, instead of being but functions, had been three forces, distinct and hostile, made to restrain each other, disposed to combat, the English constitution would have carried the germs of a frightful anarchy in its bosom.

For, finally, is not the placing in opposition the hereditary and elective principle, a king and an assembly, to create at the summit of society the necessity for a struggle full of dangers ? And if, in case of conflict, no legal means exist to compel the monarch to yield, because he is inviolable, nor the assembly, because the right of voting the subsidies renders it all-powerful, is it not evident that society floats uncertain between a revolution and a stroke of state policy ? In constructing the body of man, God has willed that the head should have sovereign authority over the arm ; the head wills, the arm executes. The constitutional regime, as interpreted by Montesquieu, had this absurdity ; that in the social body, he called the arm to control the decisions of the head.

It is true that foreseeing the struggle he confided the care of preventing or appeasing it to a third power. But is it reasonable, that to reach a mediation, we should begin by giving birth to one of the causes of the disorder ? Do not invent an evil, and you will then not have to invent a remedy.

Suppose besides that the mediating authority fulfils its part exactly, will a vigorous impulse ever spring from the mechanical arrangement of those three forces eternally struggling for their equilibrium ? What will such an equilibrium, good at the best to hinder, be worth in action ? Imagined in sight of repose, will movement be produced ? Montesquieu replies ; " those three powers should form a repose or inaction ; but as by the necessary movement of things they are constrained to go on, they will be forced to proceed in concert."[†] But does the current of a river draw along him who is upon its bank ? The vice of constitutional governments is justly to be agitated outwardly by the movement of society, absorbed as they are by their intestine quarrels and the embarrassments of living. It is not displeasing to Montesquieu for governments worthy of that name, to guide the march of society, instead of dragging it dis-

* *Esprit des Lois*, liv. 11. chap. 6.

† *Ibid.* chap. 6.

gracefully in its train. What! to prove no other care than that of existence; to wear out in vain disputes; to lose in defending one's own prerogative, or in trespassing on that of another, the time due to labors it should direct, to questions that it is important to fathom; to abase one's self to small intrigues, to prostitute to the desire of having a servile majority, the genius whose protection is claimed by millions of unfortunates. . . . Should that be among a great people, the condition of power? We have a much higher idea of the obligations which that word expresses. To be the power, is to seek the security of all in solacing those who suffer; it is to protect the weak against the strong, and the strong, alas, against themselves; it is to make liberty common riches and not the patrimony of a few; it is to discover and assemble all the intellectual strength of the nation; it is to study, to devote one's self; to be the power, is to be also an innovator, because societies are moved by a constant motion, and to regulate their eternal labor is the first duty of him who dares to command men.

But each age has its task. Before the revolution, we have said, the dominant fact was the oppression of the individual. Until then the movements of governments had been known only by their tyrannies and their rapines. Men aspired only to break the moulds of despotism, in the form in which they were. And what fitter to flatter this general disposition of minds than the system recommended by Montesquieu? One feature characterizes this system, and it is furnished us by the Spirit of the Laws.* "That one may not abuse power, it must be from the disposition of things, that power arrests power." This is the last word of the constitutional theory. It is engaged in giving authority so much occupation within itself, that it has no time to turn its attention to what is passing without or within. It is occupied with weakening the state as much as possible for the advantage of the individual, and with solving this singular problem, "To annul the principle of authority without destroying it."

Thus is explained the brilliant destiny of *the Spirit of the Laws*. The value of this book was in part, its date. Charming by grace and finesse in his *Persian Letters*, a bold writer and of admirable amplitude, either in his book, of the *grandeur and decay of the Romans*, or in the *dialogue of Eucrates and Sylla*, Montesquieu, by the *Spirit of the Laws*, placed himself in only the second rank of the publicists; and he never would have acquired the reputation of a thinker, if he had not imposed a skilfully studied conciseness, and a brief, sensible, and imperious style on inattentive readers. The work had been communicated to the friends of the author, before being printed, and had encountered severe judges among them; Helvetius condemned it for a too marked subserviency to prejudices; the president Hénault regarded it as but a collection of materials suitable to make a book; Silhouette, who was controller general, rudely counselled Montesquieu to throw his manuscripts into the fire.†

When it appeared in 1748, it was very coldly received. Voltaire who refuted it, compared it "to an illy arranged cabinet, with beautiful lustres

* *Esprit des Lois*. liv. 11. chap. 5.

† Auger, *vie de Montesquieu*, p. 33.

of rock chrystal."* The success of the work commenced with two females, Madame Tencin and Madame Geoffrin, who declared loudly in its favor.† The public was then entirely devoted to questions of theology or of pure philosophy; the political passion was soon awakened; burgherism had no difficulty in recognizing itself and voluntarily saluted its true legislator in Montesquieu; it was entirely seduced by a system which promised so many new guarantees to the individual, disarmed authority, tended to make each one his own master by freeing him from all social action.

De Lolme afterwards finished the work commenced by Montesquieu, by publishing a work which analyzed the different parts of the English constitution with much address, and brought out its advantages in an ingenious manner. Under a government dishonored by the scandal of *lettres de cachet*, of arbitrary arrests, of cruelties inflicted within the shade of the Bastille, and of decrees which condemned the finest productions of the human mind to the flames, could one have read without a kind of jealous emotion, that among a neighboring people, individual liberty was inherent in the person of the citizen, and was regarded as a *birth right*;‡ that no Englishman need fear to be imprisoned except by virtue of a judgment in conformity with the laws of the country;§ that by the terms of the act of Habeas Corpus,|| every officer or keeper of a prison, who did not deliver to his prisoner a copy of the warrant of imprisonment within six hours after a demand therefor, incurred severe penalties, and that finally every person in England had the right not only to carry his complaint before parliament by petition, but to address himself freely to the people through the press. "A formidable right to those who govern, says de Lolme, and which dissipating unceasingly the cloud of majesty in which they envelope themselves, brings them down to the level of other men."¶

The political system proposed for France by Montesquieu, and the reforms indirectly urged by De Lolme, were very important for burgherism; but were they enough for the people? Was the benefit of individual liberty of a nature to be sufficiently appreciated by so many unfortunates, whose obscurity was their sole protection against the arbitrary power of the court? Had the liberty of the press its proper value in the eyes of so many poor, who did not write and did not know how to read? What they wanted was not a government of guarantees only, it was a government of protection. Jean-Jacques understood this well; and such as we have seen him in the arena of philosophy, such was he in that of politics.

Had he not felt the necessity of a guardian power and the dangers of abandonment, who when a child, had owed his faults and his misfortunes to the liberty of the highways; he who had been reduced to live on the alms of inns and to know the tortures of nights without a resting place; he the friend of Madame de Warens, become the lackey of Madame de

* Correspondance de Voltaire, t. 8. p. 254.

† Auger, vie de Montesquieu, p. 26.

‡ De Lolme, Constitution d'Angleterre, t. 1. chap. 7. p. 93. Geneva, 1788. § Ibid.

|| The true title of this act is, An act the better to assure the liberty of the subject, and prevent exile beyond sea.

¶ De Lolme, t. 2. chap. 12. p. 39.

Vercellis. He was right in giving a tender and resigned accent to the protest of his recollections in *his confessions*. We may divine what treasures of indignation might have amassed themselves in the depth of his soul, when abandoned to the sorrows and temptations of his misery, he was one of those mendicants upon whom the effect of the caustic was then tried.

Thus there is nothing comparable to the burst of logic and eloquence in the *Discourse on the origin and foundation of inequality among men*. It was not this time burgherism demanding its emancipation; a new order of citizens presented themselves, demanding their place in the world. The style of Rousseau here recalled the pathetic and vehement language of a son of Cornelia. That sentiment so bold, that animated melancholy; that phrase, so fine, so harmonious, so full of life, and which married the vigor of Calvin to the embossment of Montaigne, all this was found in the service of the Condemned of the Earth; and the astonished age applauded the invective of the writer, whilst it seized but slightly on the revolutionary sense of those paradoxes which it took for mere literary boldness, but which were soon to resound through the assemblies of the nation, under the form of dogmatic truths and trenchant as a sword.

The discourse on inequality was a dark declaration of war on the vices of the society of the time and on despotism; Jean-Jacques attached himself in his *social contract* to establish the theory of the sovereignty of the people. The manner in which he puts the question is admirable.

"To find a form of association which defends and protects the person and property of each associate with all the common force, and by which each one uniting with all, obeys still but himself and remains as free as before."*

Thus like Boëtius,† Jean-Jacques reached liberty only through association, and he called on men to live as brethren in order to live happy.

When the sovereign is placed on one side and society on the other, and no bond of mutual dependence or reciprocal affection is established between them, we reach inevitably this consequence, that society cannot take too many precautions against the power, and that the governed have so many enemies in the governors. Thus Montesquieu, who saw the sovereign beyond and above society, had been led to look on guarantees for liberty only in anarchical complications. Rousseau saluted the sovereign only in society itself, the whole society, and he had a right to say, "the sovereignty being formed but of the individuals who compose it, has not, nor cannot have an interest hostile to theirs, consequently the sovereign power has no need of a guarantee against its subjects, since it is impossible for the body to wish to injure all its members."‡

To make the liberty of each the result of fraternal accord with his kind and of the very nature of sovereign power that it must serve as a safeguard for the people, were the two fundamental ideas of the *Social Contract*, and we cannot imagine handsomer.

* Contrat Social, liv. 1. chap. 6.

† See above, Book 1. chap. 4. "We must not doubt we are all free since we are companions." Discourse on Voluntary Servitude.

‡ Contrat Social, liv. 1. chap. 7.

For, to place the guarantees of power without itself instead of placing them in itself, is to threaten it imprudently, to irritate it; it is to breathe into it a desire of taking that which is refused it, of destroying by violence or trick the obstacles which are opposed to it; it is to give birth to disorder while waiting for despotism, and it frequently happens we must render moderate authority so strong, that it has need of being moderated in its turn. At Carthage they created the *suffetes* to restrain the senate; the tribunal of an hundred to restrain the *suffetes*; the tribunal of five to restrain the tribunal of an hundred; they but troubled the state whilst displacing tyranny.

Because, after having given the legislative power to the whole of the citizens, and defined the law to be "the expression of the general will,"* Rousseau declares the sovereignty of the people to be inalienable,† indivisible,‡ subject to error, but always worthy however of being obeyed,§ he has been reproached|| with having returned to the system of Hobbes, and attributed to the multitude the terrible despotism which Hobbes had attributed to the will of one alone. The reproach is not well founded. Rousseau has taken great care, on the contrary, to "distinguish the respective rights of the citizens and the sovereign, and the duties which the first are to discharge in their capacity as subjects, from the rights they should enjoy in their quality of men."¶ He did not wish the sovereign to be able to load the subjects with any chain useless to the community,** and in matters of religion, for example, he wishes each one to have such ideas as please him, without its pertaining to the sovereign to know any thing about them.††

Only, as there are beliefs which concern the relations of men with each other, beliefs which having regard to the present and not to a future life, have a social and not a theological importance, Rousseau grants to the sovereign, that is to say, to society considered in its whole, the right of fixing the articles of a profession of faith to which each one must submit, if he wishes to remain in the association. But do not forget that this profession of faith is *purely civil* and goes not beyond "those sentiments of sociability, without which it is impossible to be a good citizen."‡‡

In truth it would have been strange that he should have but forged a new yoke for men, who had so impetuously defended the cause of human liberty against Hobbes and Grotius, and all the publicists of tyranny, and the odious logicians of the *right of the strongest*. No, thanks to heaven, it was not so. What is dominant in the *Social Contract* is the bias for liberty.§§ When Rousseau invokes social unity, and only recognizes those laws which spring from the general will as legitimate; it is because he had in view the possible oppression of the weaker by the stronger; it is because he perceived the necessity of opposing the regular power of the whole to the despotism, either organized, or anarchical of the few; so that in composing a code of association, Rousseau would have

* Contrat Social, liv. 3. chap. 1.

† Ibid. liv. 2. chap. 1.

‡ Ibid. chap. 2.

§ Ibid. chap. 3.

|| Le Cours de littérature Française, par Villemain, leçon 22. p. 434.

¶ Contrat Social, liv. 2. chap. 4.

** Ibid.

†† Ibid. liv. 4. chap. 8.

‡‡ Ibid. liv. 4. chap. 8.

§§ See chap. 4. book 2.

been found giving his true guarantees to the individual and tracing the only path which can conduct *all men alike* to happiness and liberty.

It is easy now to measure the interval which separates the principles set forth by Montesquieu from those which Rousseau adopted. Thus how many different consequences! Montesquieu had admitted the aristocracy of the noblest; Rousseau only bent before the aristocracy of the most virtuous, the most devoted, the most worthy. Montesquieu wished to render the sceptre of kings less heavy; Rousseau urged them to break it. The first was to be followed naturally by the bourgeois, the second by the people.

But both had attacked monarchical despotism, a powerful enemy, against which the disciples of both were united towards the end of the eighteenth century.

The war had, for a long time, been carried on only against the church, and we have seen how in the formidable conspiracy headed by him, Voltaire had had kings as his accomplices. It mattered but little if he were a despot, provided he were a philosopher; sovereigns considered it an honor to enter into the anti-Christian league, drawing ministers, ambassadors, courtiers and gentlemen along with them. But the time came when a close connection, masked and hidden in vain, was to be revealed between princes and priests. The philosophical movement, headed by Voltaire, had not yet swept away the altars, when already the political movement, determined by Montesquieu and Jean-Jacques, shook thrones. The *System of Nature*, published in 1770, signalized, with a sinister splendor, this new form of the great revolt of the eighteenth century. Voltaire had maintained, that the *cause of kings was that of philosophers*;* he received then bold denials from his own disciples; "What do we see," exclaimed Holbach and his co-laborers, "in these potentates, who command nations, by *divine right*, if not ambitious men, whom nothing stops, hearts perfectly insensible to the misfortunes of the human race, souls without energy and without virtue, who neglect evident duties, about which they do not deign to inform themselves, powerful men who place themselves in an isolated situation above the rules of human equity, knaves who make a sport of probity?"† And in another place, "Among these representatives of the Divinity, there will scarcely be found one in a thousand years who has equity, sensibility, and the most ordinary talents and virtues."‡ Then comes a dark painting of the crimes born from monarchical despotism, sustained by sacerdotal despotism. Until then the philosophical watchword had been, "No more priests." They now said, "Neither priests nor absolute kings."

Frederick felt struck to the heart. He was humbled at having played so passionately a part, which was ceasing to be his own. His letters to his old allies were full of gall. He afforded an ostentatious protection to the Jesuits, whose only asylum his kingdom had become; and learning "that they were wresting from one another the *System of Nature*§ through

* Correspondance de Voltaire, see above.

† *Système de la nature*, p. 2. chap. 8. p. 263. ‡ *Ibid.* p. 264.

§ Correspondance generale de Voltaire, t. 23. p. 97.

all Europe," he had recourse to reason to combat it; the armies which he had used to steal Silesia being useless against a book.

Voltaire, on his side, had started. He was, at this period, at the height of his glory; they were preparing to make a statue of him at the expense of all enfranchised thinkers, and the list of subscribers was to receive the name of the King of Prussia; the fortunate old man was moved at a signal which did not come from him. After having praised the *System of Nature* he repented, he retracted, and the irritated Frederick soon aving his weakness, he expiated the indiscretion of his first praises,* by a torrent of abuse addressed to the terrible book.†

But the impulse was given. They always respected Voltaire; they no longer found enough boldness in him. "If the prince says to a miscreant subject that he is unworthy to live, is it not to be feared lest the subject may say to an unfaithful prince that he is unworthy to reign?" Such had been the language of Diderot‡ in the *Encyclopedia*, and what had been omitted in the form of an interrogation, he and his friends now affirmed. In his *Political and Philosophical History of the Two Indies*, Raynal exclaimed, "cowardly people, imbecile flock, you are content to groan, when you ought to war," and he is indignant at seeing millions of men led by "a dozen children called kings, who are armed with small batons called sceptres." The *Social System*, by Holbach; the *Oriental Despotism*, published under the name of Boullanger; the *Man*, by Helvetius, spake the same language. They were very far from the times in which Argenson, a philosophical minister, thought himself very bold in demanding the maintenance of the pure monarchy a little mitigated by communal liberty. A truly providential coincidence. It was at this very period that in France the despotic power surpassed the known bounds of its dishonor and its pretensions. Madame de Pompadour died in 1764, and Louis the Fifteenth had descended still lower in his amours. A woman, escaped from the arms of lackeys, had carried habits not to be named into the life of the prince, and had captivated him by pleasures whose savor consisted of a grosser infamy. They should have confined themselves to despising the favorite; they envied her.

A Duchess de Grammont became the rival of Madame du Barry, and was conquered. The Duke de Choiseul dared to show the new mistress that he was the first and a proud minister; his disdain prepared the way for his fall.

It is useless to add that in a state governed by such women, the disorder in the finances had become frightful. At the end of 1769, the ordinary and extraordinary expenses exceeded the disposable revenues by one hundred millions; they owed besides one hundred and ten millions for arrears of services, so that the demandable debt was not less than two hundred and ten millions.§ The Abbé Terray put a red hot iron on the sore. Seeing that the king refused to reduce his expenses, that the financiers refused to abandon, in the public distress, a part of their ac-

* Correspond. de Voltaire, t. 63. p. 191, 200, 273.

† The expression of Voltaire, Corres. t. 23. p. 113.

‡ Article Intolerance.

§ Introduction aux fastes de la Revolution Francaise.

customed prey; that the clergy maintained the *divine right* of exemption from taxation, that the members of parliament and the nobles remained entrenched in their privileges with pitiless egotism, Terray entered coldly, without passion and without fear, upon the path of financial violence. He reduced the pensions by one, two and three tenths; he took back from the nobles the pledged royal domains; he diminished by a fiftieth the rentes of the Hotel de Ville; he forced the holders of offices to lend twenty-eight millions to the state; he wrested twenty-six millions from the clergy;* he made himself cursed, and bore the weight of the public indignation with a serenity that nothing could disturb, not even the indignation of Voltaire. Terray left untouched the pensions which did not exceed four hundred francs; terrible to the rich, he was careful of the poor; he had replied to the opera singers exacting their pay as a sacred thing, "it is just to pay those who weep, before those who sing."† But the aggrieved interests were those which had a loud voice, and in wishing to save the monarchy, Terray shook it to its foundations.

A man then appeared upon the scene who attempted in the domain of justice, what Terray dared in that of finance. Appointed chancellor in 1766, Maupeou had sworn the ruin of the parliaments, and he kept his word. Bold and wary, firm and insinuating, obstinate with rare suppleness as a courtier, rude when it was useful to inspire fear, a buffoon in danger in order to inspire confidence, Maupeou had, in pride and baseness, every thing which leads to success.

When he conceived his bold plan, the magistracy seemed unshakable. The parliaments of the provinces had coalized under the orders of the parliament of Paris, had adopted the denomination of classes, and taken as a device these significant words: *unity and indivisibility*. Impatient to strike a blow which should prove its strength, and secretly protected by the Duke de Choiseul, the parliament of Paris was then preparing to condemn the Duke d'Aiguillon, accused of having committed a crowd of excesses in his government of Brittany and still bruised by his struggle with La Chalotais and the states of Brittany.

Maupeou did not recoil for a moment before the greatness of the danger. In declaring himself the protector of the Duke d'Aiguillon, the favorite of the mistress of the king, he turned to his advantage the influence which the science of pleasing gave to Madame du Barry. The parliament having made a decree which declared the Duke d'Aiguillon attached and suspended from his rights as a peer, Maupeou used it as an occasion to commence his attacks. They were urged with incredible ardor. "To-morrow," said he, on the 6th of December, 1770, "I open the trench before parliament." The next day indeed appeared that thundering *Edict of Discipline*, which annihilated the *classes*, transformed the right of remonstrances into a vain formality, prohibited *combined resignations*, and interdicted the magistrates from suspending the courts of justice for any cause whatever.

Maupeou had foreseen every thing; parliament might resist it; but

* See in the "Introduction aux fastes" an excellent summary of the administration of the Abbé Terray.

† Ibid. p. 119.

the word of command had been given to the musketeers and the letters de cachet were ready. Suitors complained of the interruption of justice, but the plan of a new organization was already drawn up. Public opinion was moved but to allay it; Maupeou proclaimed the suppression of the venality of offices and the gratuity of justice. What skill in such a combination of measures; what boldness, vigor, foresight.

But what! was not the changing of the ancient form of the monarchy setting a dangerous example to the revolutionary spirit? Was it not to make a violent agony of royalty, to innovate for the benefit of despotism, when the cry of revolted thinkers was rising from all sides against despotism?

Maupeou had well displayed the resources of his genius and triumphed; he had covered himself with the approval of Voltaire,* and shown by the institution of a new tribunal that he could break the old magistracy. The universal unbinding proved that the times of absolute power had passed away. A fact, unheard in the annals of courts, proves this still better. When Madame du Barry calling the Duke d'Aiguillon to the ministry, finally overthrew the Duke de Choiseul, and exiled him to Chanteloup, the courtiers followed the disgraced minister into his retreat in crowds, and his misfortune counted more flatterers than his power had ever known.

Thus the careless Louis the Fifteenth had taken the insolent whip of Louis the Fourteenth into his hand. The rancor of a courtesan and the will of a high minister, had been enough to destroy the oldest body in the kingdom, and to cause the shadow even of all resistance, to disappear with it. Royalty was in full dictatorship. This effort was to be the last.

The new magistracy was however installed amidst the applause of Voltaire, and that was much. The dissolved parliament had decreed the arrest of so many generous writers, and had caused so many books to be burned by the hand of the executioner, that the Encyclopedists smiled in secret over the violence of the chancellor, and Voltaire pursued "the assassins of Calas, La Barre, and Lally,"† into their retreat with his ardent, indefatigable hatred.

But public opinion was this time opposed to Voltaire. The name of the Maupeou parliament given to the usurping parliament, announced its unpopularity, and it would have been very difficult to wash out the stain of its origin. France was unwilling to recognize at any price as its own, judges whom it had seen invade the palace under the auspices of a detachment of musketeers,‡ and it was repugnant to the amiable, tolerant and frondeur Paris of the eighteenth century, that justice should be administered by virtue of a stroke of state policy. If then the royal parliament had the patriarch of Ferney on its side, it had the nation against it, and the public sentiment soon met a formidable inter-

* Correspondance de Voltaire, au Marechal, Duc de Richelieu. "The hermit regards the new establishments made by the chancellor as the greatest service he could render to France." T. 24. p. 23.

† Ibid. à Madame du Deffaut, t. 24. p. 4.

‡ Lucretelle, Hist. de la France, pendant le dix huitième siècle, t. 4, p. 164, 265.

preter in another Voltaire, younger and more intrepid, an eloquent Voltaire : Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais.

Never had nature made such a wrestler; and never had so many circumstances united to develop an irascible character, though master of himself. Beaumarchais knew how to employ the resources of his anger, and to shun its imprudencies. Skill in boldness, seasonableness in courage, a soul a proof against fortune, a dazzling spirit, a style sculptured, retouched and embossed like those poignard handles, which the Florentine silver-smith chiselled, every thing conspired to make of Beaumarchais a revolutionist, of his life a combat, of his enemies so many victims, of the Maupeou parliament a public laughing stock.

How was this memorable struggle opened, and by what means was it brought about? A suit for money had taken place between Beaumarchais and the residuary legatee of Paris Duverney, the Count de la Blache, the latter urging animosity to madness. Young and immensely rich, the Count de la Blache contested an incontestable debt, not from a love of justice, but from hatred to Beaumarchais, and with the avowed intention of spending an hundred thousand crowns which he might keep, rather than pay fifteen thousand francs, which he owed. But the main trial became aggravated by a formidable incident. He was accused by the judge advocate of the suit with having wished to corrupt him by buying his suffrage; and this accusation soon recognized as calumnious, tended to nothing less than having Beaumarchais branded by the hand of the executioner. Ye powerful of the earth, be careful lest your arm reaches a man of genius. If such a man is enveloped in any injustice, his indignation alone is capable of engendering events—an irritated monk can change the face of catholicism, if that monk calls himself Luther. A private individual at strife with an entire magistracy can cast it to the earth if he calls himself Beaumarchais. A chosen man is recognized by this trait, that he generalizes what interests him. His private affairs shine forth with an unexpected brightness. He draws whole people into his quarrels. He appears before the parliament, and he immediately enlarges the circuit of the judgment hall. He has a nation as witnesses and the human race as an audience; and at a period when there are in a kingdom but a king and his subjects, he raises himself from the humiliation of the accused to the importance of the accuser.

And who was he then who pursued Beaumarchais for corrupting a judge? It was a councillor from whom he had not been able to obtain an audience until after twenty-two useless efforts,* and at the price of two rouleaux of fifty Louis sent to the wife of this magistrate. Was it the fault of the suitor if the door of the councillor was not opened—once—but before a messenger carrying Louis d'or, and if they had then had the shame to exact a watch enriched with diamonds, and fifteen Louis more, for a second audience, promised by the wife, and not granted by the husband? Must Beaumarchais, ruined by the advice of M. Goëzman, whose partiality had so imprudently betrayed itself, still have the mortification to leave the fifteen Louis in the hands of Madame Goëzman, who, after

* See the picture of useless courses in the *Mémoire à consulter pour P. A. Caron de Beaumarchais*, t. 3. p. 19. edit. Furne.

having restored the rouleaux and the watch, pretended to retain these fifteen Louis, without doubt as a premium upon a bargain as disgraceful to the magistrate as onerous to the suitor? To solicit an interview in order to enlighten his judge, was called an attempt to corrupt him,—as if the shame of having sold audiences was to blacken the solicitor put off, and imposed upon.*

This is what the inimitable memoirs of Beaumarchais shew with cogent dialectics, a fund of irresistible drollery, and in a language pleasant to buffoonery, serious to eloquence.

The public, prejudiced against the parliament, espoused the quarrel of Beaumarchais. Curiosity, awakening from all parts, was changed into an universal sympathy. Ten thousand copies sold in two days† afforded an inexhaustible source of conversation and sarcasms from the most minute details of the trial. They talked about nothing but rouleaux and a repeater enriched with diamonds. The names of Arnaud Baculard, the gazetteer, Marin and Bertrand Dairolles, already devoted to the celebrity of ridicule as having been the chevaliers of the lady of the fifteen Louis, were repeated every where. Thanks to so many thousands of copies flying from hand to hand, the astonished public penetrated the mysteries of the registry court which are the disgrace of legal proceedings. They were led through the obscure turnings of the palace of justice, into those retreats destined for interrogatories, confrontings, cross examinations; formalities which Beaumarchais knew how to render so curious, making of their getting up a comedy as lively as Figaro, and giving already the part of *Basile* to the Maupeou parliament.

In fact, whilst defending himself for having wished to underrate the tribunal gradually, Beaumarchais, whose courage equalled his clear-sightedness, generalized his attacks in order to aggrandize his cause, and lending an ear to favorable murmurs, he wrote; “The nation is not seated in the benches of those who will pronounce judgment; but its majestic eye hovers over the assembly. If it is never the judge of private individuals, it is at all times the judge of judges.‡

These words then resounded as a revolutionary novelty. The fifteen Louis were an event. Whilst the gazettes of Utrecht and the Hague were entertaining Europe with the sudden shiftings of the suit commenced,§ the *memoires* of Beaumarchais were read with as much avidity at Trianon as in the city; they amused Madame du Barry; they diverted Louis the Fifteenth himself; the flagrant dereliction proved in the house of a magistrate opened a career to a thousand injurious suspicions, and the nation, flattered in its discontent, learned to despise the great bodies of the state, whilst awaiting their ruin.

Finally, the day arrived in which Beaumarchais was to appear in person before the parliament; and nothing could better prove the absence of the legal guarantees, under which the individual then suffered than the alarm into which an innocent man, otherwise so intrepid, was thrown by

* Addition au *Mémoire* à consulter, t. 3. p. 213.

† This fact is avowed by Marin, the enemy of Beaumarchais.

‡ Quatrième *Mémoire* à consulter contre M. Goëzman, t. 3. p. 299.

§ Supplément au *Mémoire* à consulter, p. 63, in the notes, and p. 298 du Quatrième *Mémoire*.

this summons. At the moment of entering the hall of parliament which resembled a temple, Beaumarchais heard the officer who advanced before him pronounce in a loud voice the Latin word *adest, adest*; he is present; and fear glided into his heart. We may read this drama in the fourth Philippic of Beaumarchais; we may picture to ourselves the writer, when a profound silence having succeeded the hum of confused voices, he was led to the bar before the assembled chambers, in the presence of sixty magistrates dressed uniformly, and in a hall gloomy from a want of torches. What was he but a mere citizen without an official protector, without a defender, alone in the presence of the red robes of parliament? Thus, Beaumarchais was so moved that his blood at first congealed.* But he soon gained courage, and refinding the sharpness of his intellect, he coped with the first president of the sovereign court, a judge and party in the debate. Being interrogated, he divides, decomposes, analyzes the questions and replies to them with precision and force, always faithful to propriety, but bold, subtle and formidable. He does not forget, and recalls to his mind that his cause is that of all citizens.

The parliament Maupeou condemned Madame Goëzman and Beaumarchais to be led to the chamber *to be there blamed on their knees*, and ordered that the memoirs of Beaumarchais should be torn and burned by the executioner.† But scarcely was this judgment known than the courageous writer found himself surrounded by public esteem. The Prince de Conti displayed a noble affectation in leaving his name at the door of Beaumarchais, with all Paris; and the first magistracy of the kingdom had to undergo the outrage of honors lavished on a citizen whom it had wished to disgrace.

This moral triumph of a writer who was afterwards to complete his revolutionary work by the marriage of Figaro, said enough, for the old parliament not to be long in being recalled. But we have already explained what rendered even that insufficient and now impossible.

Suppose then that at the approach of the solemn hour the eighteenth century had produced a man of sufficient penetration to have embraced by a glance of his eye the ensemble of the facts, and to seize the law of their chain, this man would have been enabled to say;

The day is approaching in which a great revolution will break out, for society is in the gestation of terrible events. This monarchy which is crowned with flowers, which only exercises its dictatorship through courtesans, which, when the storm grumbles around it on all sides, runs to hide its head in the bosom of violated young girls or shameless women, this monarchy is too weak, too vile not to fall into subjection. It will lose the reality of executive power.

This parliament, full of pride and pusillanimity, which makes the holy sword of justice serve as an arm for factions, which is not strong enough to seize on authority, nor resigned enough to let it go, which does not make laws, and prevents their being made, will be swallowed up in its seditious impotence. It will disappear, bequeathing its pretensions to legislative power to another assembly.

* Quatrième Mémoire à consulter, t. 3. p. 302.

† Judgment of the 26th of February, 1774.

Then burgherism, which concentrates within itself all the resources of wealth and mind, which has decried the clergy through the philosophers, and conquered the nobility by the communes, will brandish a thousand victorious swords. It will lay its hand upon the executive power, and say to the king, "I permit you to reign;" it will seize the legislative power, and exclaim, "It is I who govern."

CHAPTER III.

WAR ON THE MONOPOLIES—TRIUMPH OF INDIVIDUALISM IN INDUSTRY, OR COMPETITION.

TURGOT.

The situation of the people before the Revolution; Jurandes and Maitrises; the Mendicants; the Corvées; the Militia; a picture of the violences and iniquities of the impost—School of Individualism; Quesnay, Mercier de la Rivière, the Marquis de Mirabeau; Gournay; Turgot represents this School, and sums it up—School of Fraternity; Morelly, Mably; formidable debates—Galiani and his Dialogues—Struggle between Turgot and Necker—Their interview—Turgot, Minister; the doctrine he carries into power—The Flour War—Abolition of the Corvées—Fall of the Corporations—Triumph of Individualism in Industry—The Revolution in ideas is accomplished.

THE Revolution was not only to overthrow the domains of religion and politics, it was also to transform industry, and to give a new physiognomy to the life of the people.

Thus, to penetrate the bosom of society in former times; to lighten up those sad depths; to describe the long and cruel agony of your fathers, men of the people, and then to tell by what thinkers, and in the name of what principle the first uprisings were provoked. . . . Such is the task we must fulfil in order to comprehend a revolution, which without it would appear but as the bloody dream of a delirious country.

But among the evils of a past age, we shall, perhaps, find some still existing; evils which shall have changed their name without changing their nature. Among those millions of victims whom the Revolution avenged, and whose race it hoped to free, perhaps will be recognized those who in our own day are astonished, after so many efforts, at their immutable misery.

Let these not despair. If history shows us the life of the human race composed of an innumerable series of deaths, it proves to us also that each new kind of oppression brings a smaller sum of calamities, and that the evil exhausts itself by its diversity of forms. Yes, amidst the noise of that vast groaning which is prolonged from century to century, and over that route on which so many generations have perished miserably crushed, mankind walks with a sure step towards the light, justice, happiness.

What was the state of society before the revolution? In what situations did jurandes, maîtrises, corvées, the militia, the edicts, concerning mendicity, the imposts levied by the farmers of the revenue, place the people? Behold the picture we have first to draw.*

The device of the six bodies of merchants of the city of Paris has these words for a motto: *Vincit concordia fratrum*.

Fraternity, then, was the sentiment which originally presided over the formation of the communities of merchants and artisans, regularly constituted during the reign of Saint Louis. For in those middle ages which the breath of Christianity animated, manners, customs, institutions, every thing was colored with the same tint; and among so many strange or simple practices, some had a profound signification.

When assembling the oldest of each trade, Etienne Boileau caused the usages of the corporations to be inscribed on a register, the very style was redolent of the dominant influence of the Christian spirit. Compassion for the poor, solicitude for the disinherited of the world, frequently shine out through the concise compilation of the regulations of the ancient jurandes. "When the masters and sworn bakers," it is said in them, "shall go through the city, accompanied by a sergeant of the châtelet, they shall stop at the windows where bread is exposed for sale, and if it is not large enough, the batch shall be carried away by the master." But the poor are not forgotten, and the very small loaves are distributed among them in the name of God.†

And if, in penetrating into the bosom of the jurandes, we recognize the impress of Christianity in them, it is not because they are seen in the public ceremonies carrying about solemnly their devout banners, and marching beneath the invocation of the saints of Paradise; these religious forms concealed the sentiments to which the unity of belief gave birth. A passion which enters no longer into public manners and things then united conditions and men; charity. The church was the centre of every thing. Around it, in its shade, the infancy of industry made its essay. It marked the hour for labor, it gave the signal for repose. When the bell of Notre Dame or Saint Mary sounded the *angelus*, the trades ceased to labor, work remained suspended, and the city, going to sleep at an early hour, awaited the next day, when the bell of the neighboring abbey announced the commencement of the labors of the day.‡

Mixed with religion, the corporations of the middle ages had derived from it a love for mysterious things and superstition, the poetry of ignorance; but the protection of the weak was one of the most cherished employments of the Christian legislator. He recommends probity to the measurers; he forbids the tavern-keeper from ever raising the price of ordinary wines, the common drink of the poor;§ he wishes provisions to

* These were the drapers, grocers, haberdashers, furriers, hosiers and silversmiths. See Sauval, *Antiquités de Paris*, t. 2.

† *Livre des Métiers* d'Etienne Boileau, dans les Documents inédits sur l'Histoire de France, titre 1. des Talemeliers.

‡ *Livre des Métiers*, Regulations of the carpenters, masons, &c.

§ *Ibid.*, titre 7, of the tavern-keepers of Paris.

be exhibited in open market, that they should be good and honest; and in order that the poor may have their share at the best price, merchants shall not have permission to buy food until after all the other inhabitants of the city.*

Thus the spirit of charity penetrated to the bottom of that artless society which saw Saint Louis seat himself beside Etienne Boileau, when the prevost of the merchants was administering justice.† They did not doubtless then know that febrile ardor of gain, which sometimes gives birth to prodigies, and industry had not attained that renown, that power which now dazzles, but the life of the laboring man was not troubled by bitter jealousies, by the necessity of hating his fellow, by the pitiless desire of ruining him, by surpassing him.‡ What touching union was there, on the contrary, between artisans of the same branch of industry. Instead of avoiding each other, they came together, in order to give reciprocal encouragement and render mutual services. In the sombre and already old Paris of the thirteenth century, the trades formed as many groups. The butchers were at the foot of the tower of Saint Jacques. The Rue de la Mortellerie assembled the masons. The corporation of weavers gave its name to the Rue de la Tixeranderie, which they inhabited. The money-changers were ranged on the Pont-au-Change, and the dyers on the shores of the river. Thanks to the principle of association, vicinage awakened rivalry without hatred. The example of diligent and skilful workmen engendered stimulus to the highest point. Artisans carried on a fraternal competition with each other.

Add to this, that the public interest was not lost sight of; for in order to carry works of art and industry to the highest degree of perfection, the direction of the novices was confided to old and experienced workmen.

Unfortunately, along side of the principle of order and love, the corporations of the trades contained a principle of exclusion. There was in society a family of laborers, but this family did not admit all those who were compelled to work for a living. There was the fundamental vice of the institution. It scarcely showed itself in the earlier periods, but when a germ of tyranny exists at all, there is but one mode of preventing its increase; it is to extirpate it. The spirit of fraternity inhabited the dwelling; the spirit of oppression was not long in coming to watch at the doors. The Christian sentiment gradually becoming weaker, the good diminished, the evil increased; and that which had been at first a great school for young laborers,‡ ended by being transformed into an association jealous of knowledge, and more and more exclusive and tyrannical.

That evil tendency of the corporations should have been combatted, the kings of France, through avidity encouraged it. They sold a thousand odious privileges to the communities; they were permitted, on paying a fine, to limit the number of apprentices; they sold freedom papers

* Livre des Métiers, of the hucksters who sell fruit.

† See the learned introduction of M. Depping au Livre des Métiers.

‡ Vital Rou, Rapport sur les jurandes et maîtrises, 1806.

without which titularies were compelled to prove their apprenticeship. Organized labour offering an easily accessible prey to taxation, they soon dug this mine to exhaustion. They created, they sold an unheard of number of offices, which the trades were then compelled to buy; offices of syndics, controllers, inspectors, measurers, visitors, commissioners of every kind,—and as the edict of Louis the Fourteenth extended to the whole kingdom the regulating spirit included in the cities to which freedoms were given by the edicts of Henry the Third, French industry was thus, we may say, confined to exclusive companies. These latter, on their side, did not fail, by raising the price of merchandize, by aggravating the pecuniary conditions of apprenticeship, to cast upon the people the burthen with which royalty loaded them. So well was it done, that in the eighteenth century, the noble and fruitful principle of association disappeared in the jurandes, behind a monstrous mixture of abuses and iniquities.

When we pass in review the numerous obstacles, from which on the eve of the revolution, the poor man had to rid himself in order to exercise a profession or be enabled to live by his labor, we are seized with grief and almost alarm.

And first, each master not being able to have more than one apprentice,* it was a difficulty of the highest kind to find a master.

Apprenticeship was the second. The expenses reached so large a sum, that many died before attaining to it. It was necessary for the apprentice to have an indenture certified before a notary by which he engaged to serve his master for five or six years, receiving no salary, but on the contrary paying for the services he must render. The indenture once registered in the bureau of the community, the aspirant had to pay on entrance, the taxes of wax, chapel, fraternity, welcome; he had also to pay the fees of the guards, freemen and the clerk. It did not cost less than five hundred livres to be admitted to apprenticeships in the smallest professions.†

During the seven years which formed the shortest duration of proof, the apprentice paid each year an annual imposition, destined to defray the charges of the community. He did not belong to himself until the expiration of his service. If his master fell sick, the time he had to serve was sold to another. If he changed masters, he had to pay thirty livres for the transfer of the indenture. If he changed his shop, he even paid, in some trades, for this mutation. If his master died without heirs, the apprentice was not free; he had to go to the prevostship to demand another master.‡ Finally he was permitted to ransom himself for money, not to marry.

After the apprenticeship commenced a second servitude, that of the companion. Perfectly instructed in his art, the companion carried its

* *Consideration sur les Companies, Societies et Maitrises*, p. 18. This work published anonymously, was the composition of Oliquot de Blevarches, and was inspired by Gournay. London, 1758.

† *Bigot de Sainte-Croix, Essai sur l'abus des privilèges exclusifs*, published in the *Ephemerides du Citoyen*, January, 1775.

‡ *Titre 40, des ouvriers des draps de soye*, p. 93, et passim, des documents inédites de l'histoire de France.

insignia about him. He suspended an iron horse to one of his ear-rings. if he were a farrier, a square and compass, if he were a carpenter, etc. ;* but these emblems with which he was entitled to adorn himself, and which he displayed with pride, were but a vain consolation for his subjection, they were the visible signs of the social injustice, which, whilst recognizing him as skilful, prohibited him from employing his skill for his own advantage. The companion could not yet pretend to the maitrise ; he received wages only and he remained in this condition for a period always double, and sometimes treble, that of apprenticeship.†

The time finally came when the companion was to be received into the maitrise; but here new and frequently insurmountable obstacles awaited him. The letter of maitrise was the title which conferred the exclusive right of selling, fabricating and laboring in his own name ; he was to pay for registering this letter, the royal tax, the tax for reception from the police, the tax for opening a shop, the fees of the dean, the fellows, the ancient masters, the modern master and those of the door-keeper and clerk. But before submitting to those ruinous formalities, he had to undergo an examination, to perform a master piece selected from the most difficult parts of his profession. Do you not believe that all were submitted to proof ; one could be freed from it . . . by paying for it. Admission to the maitrise was then a mere matter of finance and monopoly ; a proceeding got up by corporations to lighten the weight of the debts, and diminish the number of masters in communities in which it was not fixed invariably. Grave authors estimate the cost of reception at two thousand livres ;‡ and as the clergy were not forgotten, a part of this sum went in holy bread, wax candles and *Te Deums*. In the community of pastry cooks the title of ancient alone cost twelve hundred livres.§ What shall I say more ? The innocent liberty which young girls have of culling flowers and arranging them into bouquets was transformed into a privilege,|| and it was only on the payment of two hundred livres that one could become a mistress bouquet maker of Paris.

Such were the barriers erected at distances upon the road of labor, at least before *strangers* ; for thus they called every one who was so unfortunate as not to be son of a master ; so profound was the line of demarcation between burgherism and the people. Every impediment was placed in the way of the plebeian stranger ; favors of all kinds on that of the son of the master. If the son of a master labored with his father until he was seventeen years of age, they asked no more ; he was a companion of right. In most of the bodies he was not subjected to the expenses or formalities of apprenticeship, nor to the obligation of a master-piece.¶

* Monteil, *Hist. des Français des divers Etats*, t. 10, decay of the Companions.

† Cliquot de Bierraches, *ubi supra*.

‡ *Encyclopedia*, word *Maitrises*. The article is by Roland de la Platière, afterwards a minister during the revolution.

§ Bigot de Sainte-Croix, *Essai sur l'abus des privilèges exclusifs*.

|| *Discours de l'avocat General Séguier*, in the bed of justice of the 12th of March, 1776.

¶ Cliquot de Bierraches, *Considerations sur les Compagnies, Sociétés et Maitrises*, p. 27.

Thus perpetuated in the same families, the privilege of making and vending constituted a distinct class; and such was the jealous pride of this class, that the widow of a master lost her rights if she sought a second husband out of the *maitrise*.* An arbitrary police, which constraining the inclinations of the heart, led to debauchery or concubinage! A monstrous legislation, which, introduced clandestinely into the communities, became the consecration of egotism in them, and tended to raise impassable walls around burgherism.

Let us go on to the end of this painful search. What a sight does it afford. No more fraternity between bodies of the same trade; no more connection between the laboring cities of the same kingdom. Wheelwrights were considered by the corporation of joiners as a foreign people. The locksmith of Lyons is as much a stranger among the locksmiths of Paris,† Rouen and Lille, as if he had come from America. A companion received as a master in one city, could not exercise the *maitrise* in another, without being subjected to a new reception and new taxes sometimes double, treble and even quadruple.

On seeing the communities levy so many taxes upon labor and receive money through so many channels, we are tempted to believe that they possessed immense wealth. The truth is, however, they were most of them in debt, from the enormous expenses of their internal government, from the loans on which they had to pay interest, and from presents to the *jurés* (freemen), which were so large that a decree of the council was required to limit them to eight hundred livres; so onerous were the seizures resulting from the domiciliary inquisition which the *jurés* exercised over the workmen and their work. But the most active cause of the ruin of the communities was their lawsuits. Their registers, which show the expenses of the proceedings‡ at almost a million a year, attest that interminable quarrels troubled the domain of labor. There is a perpetual strife between the booksellers and the venders of old books, (*bouquinistes*) as to what distinguishes an old book (*bouquin*) from a book; the saddlers attacked the wheelwrights; the edge tool makers complained of the farriers; the nailers were unwilling that the blacksmiths should be permitted to make the nails they wanted; even the criers of old iron had their *jurande*, and to crown the scandal, in a trial which lasted for three centuries between the venders of old clothes and the tailors,§ four or five thousand judgments were given without their being enabled to draw the proper limit between a new and an old garment. There was, as we may see, a frightful disorder, and the worst of it was, it had its source in egotism or pride. What would now become of the charitable and pious *jurandes* of the times?

~~Burgher vanity gave birth to a thousand absurd distinctions, and it betrayed itself even in the difference of shades of costume. In the back part of his shop the merchant was enthroned like a sovereign on a form~~

* See amongst others the regulations of the butchers, art. 18, in the letters patent of February, 1587. Lamare, *Traité de la police*, t. 2. titre 20.

† Decree of the Council, 1755.

‡ Forbonnais, *Recherches sur les finances*, t. 1. p. 178.

§ Vital Roux, *Rapport sur les jurandes et maitrises*, p. 24.

higher than the other seats, and beneath a wig which became a distinctive sign in the hierarchy of the jurandes. The tailor had to content himself with a wig terminating with a single buckle; two were allowed to the silver smith; the pride of the apothecary was increased by wearing three, whilst the master wig maker himself was condemned to two simple twists.* Grotesque frivolities, which had serious consequences.

Need we be astonished after this, at the number of formidable bandits who infested the kingdom? To close the avenues of labor to so many of the common people, was to crowd the ill disposed into the frightful pursuits of rapine and murder. From this arose around the occupied population, a population vowed to crime, and which forced the state to spend in Marshalseas, prisons and houses of detention more than would have been required to feed them. From thence also arose the expatriation of very many laborious, enterprising men, who preferred incurring the chance of removal to living in a country in which they could not become masters, nor marry without becoming miserable.

The profession of a beggar remained and it had in its turn its official difficulties, its schools, its masters, we had almost said its juranda. For example, to receive alms at the door of churches constituted a privilege, the fortunate enjoyers of which bore among the poor the name of *troniers*.† The low noise which this permanent army of misery made was heard through the eighteenth century. Severe edicts were passed from time to time to restrain, alarm it. "Vagabonds or persons having no apparent means of living, provides an ordinance of 1764, shall be condemned, *although they shall not have been accused of any crime or fault*, men from sixteen to seventy years of age, to three years in the galleys, men of seventy years and upwards, as also the infirm, girls and women, to be confined for three years in an hospital." There was a time when they added three deniers per livre to the taxes and the product of it was employed in building houses of restraint for beggars. They labored in them under the whip. But their labor entered into competition with certain trades, and the latter complained. Moreover a population in rags, shut up in infected places of confinement, was soon to become a sinister embarrassment. Each depot was a hearth of hideous maladies, a theatre on which death appeared only with despair. Among those mendicants whom they dared neither to put to death, nor let live, many scaled the walls, forced the gates and escaped; others but what will happen with those inert pensioners of authority, whom it is fatiguing to punish? they send them away to their proper homes and breathe until they return more sombre, more menacing than ever. In 1767, FIFTY THOUSAND beggars were arrested; they were too numerous for the thirty-three places of confinement in the kingdom;‡ and the hospitals, the workhouses, the prisons are opened to the superfluous population. The number of hungry souls goes on increasing. Ten years afterwards, at the end of successive famines, the beggars are computed at ONE MILLION TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND.§ Philosophy then became disturbed; the

* Monteil, Hist. des Français des divers États, t. 9, decay of the artisans.

† The ordinance against beggars of the 27th of July, 1777.

‡ Necker, administration des finances, t. 3. chap. 16. p. 163, et suivant.

§ Monteil, Hist. des Français des divers États, t. 10. decade de verdure.

gazettes speak of it ; books and pamphlets are printed as to how a million of men are to subsist, and a mere advocate, Linguet,* offers fifty louis from his own purse as a prize for the best work on the suppression of mendicity. Useless efforts! where to labor is a privilege, misery will not be hindered from increasing. The command of the gaoler will no longer restrain the beggars ; they prefer to drag their sores about at liberty and in the sun, to promenade their ulcers from one end of France to the other, to rob or beg by day, and sleep at night in the barns into which the hospitality of fear will admit them, to wander through the highways and by-paths, now groaning, now grumbling, until having reached some grand centre of population, they shall there find mendicity organized into a corps, with its orders, leaders, troubles, revolutions.

Of all the iniquities of the feudal regime, there was none perhaps more odious than the *corvée*, especially more wounding by its forms. On certain days in the year, the royal officers were seen traversing the country, wresting poor peasants from their families, and driving this flock of men before them, to cause them to construct public roads three or four leagues from their cottages.

If the slave is treated like a beast, he is at least fed by his master, but those subjected to the *corvées* had to subsist during their labor on the bread begged during the hours of rest. Their master was an unknown, inhuman chief, who commanded them harshly without paying them.

Let one picture to himself what indignation must have been gradually amassed in souls, which misery had not rendered entirely brutal, when a peasant could say, " my life is my wages, and they condemn me to labor without them. My family are dependent on my labor, and they take my days from me to compel me to smooth roads beneath the wheels of carriages, under the steps of the merchants, the priests and the elegant cavaliers. I am ignorant of the art of breaking stones on the roads, and if my work is badly done, they will come some time hence, to make me do it over again. I am a man, and they treat me with more harshness than they do oxen or mules. (I pay the tax the clergy and nobility do not pay, and they make me break stones on the road for the clergy and nobility who are profited by it, without even thanking me. They sell me salt for sixty two livres the hundred pounds weight;† they rob me of tobacco ; they condemn me to lodge soldiers, and when I give a whole week of my labor, they do not indemnify me ; and if my beasts die of fatigue they will not pay me their value, and if I become disabled, they will throw me brutally on the public charity."

The time for being a soldier came, for drawing by lot ; and the exemptions granted to tonsured clerks, to collectors, to school masters, to the oldest sons of the advocates or counsellors of the king or of a farmer, to the people of Paris and the valets of gentlemen,‡ but increased the fatal chances for the poor peasant. And as yet nothing raised in his eyes a condition which seemed to be degrading, the name alone of a soldier having become a subject of horror in the valiant country of

* Annales politiques de Linguet, t. 3. p. 342. 1778.

† See the ensuing pages on the exercise on salt or gabel.

‡ Monteil, Hist. de Français des divers états, t. 10, decay of the Provincial soldiery.

France. When the hour for drawing sounded, many fled into the woods, and the others, irritated at a desertion, which by diminishing the numbers increased the risk, pursued the flyers. There were then furious fights. They fought with guns and axes; the labors of the field were suspended; the inhabitants of one parish taking the part of their own people against those of neighboring parishes, the disorder became general, blood flowed, terror pervaded the neighborhood.* The military service was especially odious to the inhabitants of the mountain districts, for these form a broken picturesque country, whose image, easily sculptured in the memory, attaches itself to the heart and never leaves it.

We should however have but a very imperfect idea of the misfortunes of the people, if we were ignorant of what the taxes then were.

What a picture would France of the eighteenth century have presented to the traveller, who traversed it to study its fiscal laws. He would have seen this fine kingdom cut up in every sense; traversed by twelve hundred leagues of internal barriers;† war organized on this long line of artificial frontiers; all the passages guarded by fifty thousand men, of whom twenty-three thousand were soldiers out of uniform,‡ but armed to restrain or pursue smuggling; he would have seen France composed of provinces almost entirely strangers to each other, differing in laws and manners, separated from each other by custom-houses, distinguished by privileges. The tax collector might have said to him, "For me, France is divided into countries where provincial sessions are held, countries divided into generalities and elections and conquered countries; for the farmer general, it was divided into national provinces, and provinces like a foreign country;" the jurist might have shown him a part of the kingdom governed by the Roman law, and then part obeying the common law; the president of the salt granary might have pointed out to him provinces of the large and small gabel, exempt countries, free provinces, provinces of salt wells and of *quart-bouillon* Barbarous denominations! afflicting contrasts! sad parcelling of a monarchy which had for ages been making an effort towards unity.

If all these provinces pay a tax to the sovereign, if it is the people every where who support almost the entire burthen, there is none the less a frightful confusion in this common injustice, in the bosom of which tyrannies live and manœuvre at their ease.

Let us hasten to say, for the honor of the principle of representation, that the countries where provincial sessions were held were happier than those which were divided into generalities and elections, less oppressed,§ more flourishing. It was but a shadow of independence which protected them. The representatives of the three orders composed periodically the *estates* in them, that is, a provincial assembly which alone had the right of assessing the taxes in the province, after having granted it to the king by the name of a *gratuitous gift*, a significant appellation,

* Mémoires sur la vie et les ouvrages de Turgot, par Dupont de Nemours, p. 5 of the Errata.

† Mémoire de Calonne aux notables.

‡ Necker, administration des finances, t. 1. chap. 8. p. 195.

§ State of the revenue, in a speech from Necker to the constituent assembly at the opening session.

which survived the traditions of banished liberty. If taxation admitted any favor, any freedom, it was in favor of the countries in which provincial sessions were held. Some, as Brittany, Artois, Flanders, Navarre, were exempt from the gabel; others, like Provence, Roussillon, Lorraine, a part of Burgundy, had obtained immunities from excises.

The king imposed the tax in the countries divided into generalities and elections, he demanded it in those in which provincial assemblies were held, and these differences in words answer to a certain contrast in things. Sovereign every where else, the power of the intendants was a little balanced in the countries in which provincial assemblies were held, by that radiating of influence which belonged to the assemblies. Even the appearances of liberty are protective.

On the other hand, the countries which were divided into generalities and elections being submitted to the caprices of viceroys who spoke and acted as masters, were mute, sad and miserable. Their present servitude recalls their name, for they were thus called, because, in the time of Saint Louis, it was capable men chosen by the community who assessed the tax; but since the time of Charles the Ninth those officers had ceased to be chosen by the people, and though they had become a king's council, the delusory name *chosen* was left to them.*

Chosen too frequently from among those who were ignorant of rural affairs, and desirous of shining or making a fortune, the intendants were the scourges of their provinces. "Men lived in them like flocks, of which the wolf ravishes now one, now another; the master, who is the universal shepherd, is too far off, and the foreign guard to which they are confided is frequently that which devours them."† How many bad intendants were there for one Turgot? There were some who, having a taste for ostentation, built themselves splendid hotels, demolished the principal place to lay out avenues, and ruined the country to embellish their own residence; others, wishing to please the minister, calumniated their district to him, represented it as fruitful in resources and capable of sustaining all the increase of taxation he wished to levy on it.‡ They knew that such language is always listened to with favor.

Once decreed in the secrecy of the council, the warrant for the tax went by one road to reach the tax-payer, whilst the tax followed another to reach the treasury. It was first divided among the thirty-two districts by the council, then among the sub-districts by the intendants, then among the parishes of each sub-district by the *elect*, and finally among the inhabitants of each parish by the collectors. Tailles, capitation and vingtièmes, the whole direct tax, was poured out by the collectors into the hands of the tax receivers, who transmitted them to the receivers general, who paid them into the public treasury.§

Such was the double mechanism, but what crying injustices were there under this apparent simplicity. None in the kingdom, out of the coun-

* Guy Coquille, Hist. de Nevers, cited by M. Bailly in his *histoire des finances*.

† Marquis de Mirabeau, *Mémoire sur les états provinciaux*; it is printed in the 6th volume of *l'Ami des Hommes*.

‡ *L'Espion Anglais*, t. 5. p. 115, 125. 1777.

§ Necker, *administration des finances*, t. 1. p. 96.

cils, knew the sum total of the direct taxes. Despotism here enveloped itself in an impenetrable mystery, the government then taking as its maxim, *that the people easily endure their misfortunes provided they are artfully concealed from them.** Each province was ignorant of the fate of the others, and was not informed of its own, until after the irrevocable decision of the minister. No appeal, no resource was truly possible against a will which knew how to render all control illusory. Whoever dared to claim it, in the first instance, before the district tribunals, or by appeal to the court of aids, risked no less than his ruin, if it pleased the council of state to evoke the affair,† and to strangle it in a kind of clandestine bed of justice. Nothing in France was above the will of the king, unless it was that sovereign authority of reason, to which the right of *humble remonstrances* appeared to render homage. His good pleasure had no counterpoise but in human conscience; the only corrective of despotism, was the groaning of the people or their still more formidable protest—silence.

The English economist, Adam Smith, visited France in 1765, he saw our great intellects, studied our finances, and when having returned to his own country, he composed his famous book on the wealth of nations, he wrote,‡ “The most sanguinary laws exist in those countries in which the revenue is farmed out.” These words applied with justice to France, in which five out of the eight principal branches of the revenue of the crown were farmed out, viz: the salt tax, excise, duties, crown land, and tobacco, all indirect contributions.

The history of the farmers general would be the martyrology of the tax payers. France was for them a conquered country; not content with pressing upon the people with pitiless sharpness, they irritated them by the insolent display of their sudden fortune. “They return the blood,” says the Marquis of Mirabeau, “as if they drew it from the capillary vessels, whilst they bleed the people by the throat.”§ Before the time of Necker, every thing above the price of their lease, composed their enormous gain. Since the time of that minister, they were compelled to divide the first four millions of profit|| with the state and a small part of the surplus. The monarch, moreover, interested in their rule and always in debt, dared not refuse them the terrible arms which they asked for. Prisons, the galleys, the gallows and ferocious tribunals were granted to them to menace and punish fraud. Their avidity was not repressed until there remained nothing more for them to take, and we cannot read without anger, in a decree of the king’s council made against the farmer general Templier, on the 13th of July, 1700; “that there are many persons in Burgundy who use no salt . . . Their poverty not permitting them to buy wheat or barley, but oats for food, compels them to live on herbs and even to die of hunger.¶

* L’Espion Anglais. See a picture of impositions in the year 1777, p. 119.

† Remonstrances of the Court of Aids, 1770.

‡ Wealth of Nations, book 5, chap. 2.

§ Le Marquis de Mirabeau. *Théorie de l’impôt*, p. 113.

|| Necker, *administration des finances*, t. 1. p. 138.

¶ Charter-house of the Estates of Burgundy quoted by M. Thomas in, *une province sous Louis Fourteenth*, p. 54.

Favorite courtiers were enabled at all times to obtain shameful clippings out of those enormous gains of the farmers general, and under the name of *croupiers*, they received the wherewithal to pay a courtesan, or endow a mistress of whom they wished to be rid. Finally, in exchange for their importance in the state, the farmers general, on closing their accounts, graciously sent to the king, out of what was left in their strong boxes, large sums of gold in velvet purses;* and he did not think his majesty compromised in receiving this ostensible good-will offering out of the excess of the contributions furnished by a ravaged kingdom.

The distress of the inhabitants of the country was so deep, that from the time of Vauban to Turgot, from Saint Simon to Necker, all who open their eyes to see, perceive everywhere dark pictures, frightful and nameless misery. And this revelation of the sufferings of the people is the less suspicious, since it emanates from the great themselves. It is dukes, marshals of France, millionnaires,† ministers of state, who have drawn the pictures of the suffering of the poor. In speaking of a single branch of the imposts, the law of the customs, Necker said, "Its legislation is so embroiled, that there are scarcely more than one or two men in a generation who completely understand its science."‡ These simple words show what the labyrinth of impositions was in France, and why the historian should confine himself to exposing those which best prove the necessity for the Revolution.

The oldest of the contributions of the people was the *taille*. In the provinces possessing provincial assemblies, or those of generalities and elections, which had a register of lands, as the districts of Montauban, Grenoble, Paris, the *taille* was levied on an assessment of land, it was then *real*. In the other provinces it was *personal*, it was levied upon all personal goods, property and merchandize. It was based upon a difficult and somewhat arbitrary assessment of the property of the citizens. But *real* or *personal*, the *taille* fell but upon plebeian goods and plebeians.§

Who would believe it? This French nation, so renowned through the world for its generosity and spirit, was governed in matters of taxation by two equally odious principles; the one passed into a law under this formulary: "the people are *tailleable* and *corveable* at pleasure; the other introduced itself into manners, to consecrate in them, that taxation was a sign of plebeianism and a dishonor. Under the pretext of saving their dignity, the nobles and clergy granted to themselves a dispensation from paying the *taille*, their egotism taking the appearances and proportion of pride. The people were but the more unfortunate, since the more they contributed, the more they despised them. They bore at once the burthen and the disgrace.

The nobility, it is true, contributed its blood, and devoted to the military service, it claimed to be exempt from the *taille*; but since Charles

* Monteil, Hist. des Français, t. 10. decade des onze sousseurs.

† Saint Simon, Vauban, Turgot, Necker, Calonne, etc.

‡ Necker, Administration des Finances, t. 2. p. 273.

§ Memoire sur les impositions en France, t. 2. p. 19-65; Paris, royal press, 1769. This work is an official treatise on the subject; it is by Moreau de Beaumont.

the Seventh had rendered it perpetual, in order to pay an army which had become permanent, the nobles ended by serving the state in enrolled and subsidized troops, and in receiving from the King of France wages for their bravery, they had lost the right of privilege. The burghers and peasantry, moreover, appeared upon fields of battle; they furnished now the archers; under Richelieu and Louis the Fourteenth the people disputed the monopoly of arms with the nobility; they had learned to die without fear, and even without renown. And yet the whole weight of the *tailles* was allowed to rest upon them.

The nobles and the clergy were, however, reached indirectly by the personal *taille*, and in this way; this tax, when applied to real estate, was divided into a *taille* of property, and one of improvement. The clergy and the nobles were exempt from the first; but the second was imposed on the farmers; they recompensed themselves for it by a reduction on the rent, and in closing the account, it was the proprietor who paid a part of the personal *taille* of his farmer—but nobles, ecclesiastics, magistrates, and in general the notables of the third estate were exempt from the *taille* of improvement, for meadows, vineyards and woods, and for four ploughs of arable land.* The burghers of Paris and of the free cities enjoyed the same freedom for enclosures within the walls, and for the orchards which surrounded their country houses.†

Taxation is pitiless for the poor, and it was on him that all the franchises of the higher classes fell. A farmer for a noble, or a cultivator on his own account, he meets the tax collector face to face; all the harshness of an execution will be for him, and nothing, not even his honesty, will free him from it. If he pays promptly this year, they will increase his tax the next, for excise officers do not love exactness; expenses, law proceedings, evictions, ignoble remissions, which bailiffs and officers make, are the perquisites of the receiver, who receives eight francs a day to pay a tax-gatherer's bailiff, to whom he gives twenty sols. If certain parishes determine, says the Marquis of Mirabeau, and to pay without constraint, the receiver, who sees himself most clearly deprived of his property, falls into an ill-humor, and at the next assessment, it is so arranged between him, the elect, the sub-delegate and other barbers of the kind, that this exact parish shall pay double for taking his living from him.‡

If the peasant does not pay at the designated time, the charges immediately commence; constraint commences its march; the collector is seen running about the country, carrying off the clothes which are drying on the bushes, and if they are not enough, he enters the house of the taxable, takes his bed, his furniture, takes down his doors, even carries off the roof if it is tiled. "It is very common," says the Marshal de Vauban, "to push executions so far as to unhang the doors of houses, after having sold what was within, and they have been seen to demolish them, in order to take away the beams, joists and flooring, which were sold for five or six times less than their value, towards the payment of the tax."§

* Edict of March, 1667.

† *Memoire sur les impositions en France*, p. 66 et 69. t. 2.

‡ *L'Ami des Hommes*, t. 2. p. 43. de la circulation.

§ *Dime royale*, 1707, p. 54. de l'édition Davie, chez Guillaumin.

This was not all; there was a condition still worse than that of the tax payer; it was that of the tax collector. It was so much dreaded, that they were obliged to render it compulsory on each inhabitant in his turn. Kind or passionate, the collector was always in a cruel situation, having no other rule for the assessment than the vague idea which he formed to himself of the fortune of each. Responsible for the whole mandate of the parish, he magnified for his greater safety the numbers of good payers to the advantage of the negligent; accountable for the errors he might commit, he trembled lest at each step he should meet one of those innumerable privileged persons, who, by purchasing some office, had purchased exemption from the tax, and evil to him if he taxed this privileged unknown, for he was then condemned in his own name.*

Besides, in spite of his conscience, the collector was a man after all, and the collection was a fine opportunity to exercise a secret vengeance, to favor his friends, to show a regard for the great; so that he became corrupt in attaching hatred to himself, for the collector was almost as much cursed as the tax, each one having to bear by turns the maledictions of his neighbors upon his head. Sometimes it was a peasant of bad character who discharged those functions of justice; more frequently the collector not knowing how to read or write,† nor make any calculations by rule, became himself the public laughing-stock, whilst his ignorance dictated the tax at chance on the back of a letter, and whilst abandoning his own affairs for the payment of a smaller sum than his expenses, he was compelled to conduct fusileers from door to door, with the perspective of paying for those in arrears, or even of going to prison to bear the penalty of the insolvency of the poor or the bad faith of the rich.

Such was the tradition of old iniquities in France, that taxes which were most equitable at the commencement were not long in degenerating and becoming as corrupt as the others. The *poll* tax, and that of the *vingtièmes*, which were at first equalized proportionably upon the revenues of the citizens, ended with being assessed with the most shocking inequality. Louis the Fourteenth, in establishing the poll tax, wished it be levied upon every one, from the dauphin who paid two thousand livres, to the peasant who paid twenty sols.‡ But privileges soon arose; the clergy claimed to be freed on the payment of a gratuity, and through the uncertain appreciation of fortunes, arbitrary proceedings so glided in, that the people who at the beginning had paid but one-sixth of it, in the time of Necker paid three-fourths.§

The *vingtièmes* (twentieths) sprung from that famous impost of the tenth denier, which Louis the Fourteenth levied at the period of his misfortunes, and of which the Duke of Saint Simon has written the sad history. "There is nothing, says Adam Smith, that a government learns faster, than the act of diving into the pockets of the people."|| Once

* Decree of the Council of the 4th of March, 1740. The affair of the director of the post of Arpagon.

† *Memoirs of the Life of Turgot*, by Dupont de Nemours. Philadelphia, 1782.

‡ See the reports made to the assembly of the provinces of Berri, in the remarkable work of M. de Girardet, *Essais sur les Assemblées Provinciales*, p. 98.

§ Declaration of the 18th of January, 1695. Decree of the following 22d of February.

|| *Wealth of Nations*, book 5. chap. 2.

established, the vingtièmes never ceased. What did he say? They were doubled,* trebled,† they added to them sous for the livre and the decree of the council of the 2d of November, 1777, provides that the poor alone shall pay exactly the vingtième. The noble and powerful found means by masking their fortunes, by making false returns to pay but a half or two thirds of what they should have done, and they were indignant that they were thus forced to give up the secrets of their families, and to set them on fire by that lamp borne upon their most shameful parts.‡

The time will come in which mankind discovering the harmonious laws of labor and of the assessment of wealth, will procure facility of existence, and the pleasures of life for every one. The men of that future will be unwilling to believe that there was a period resplendent with intellect, and cotemporaneous with the finest genius, in which the majority of the French found a difficulty in living; in which the largest contributions were levied upon the first necessities of life; in which bread, salt, meat, wine were extremely dear; in which salt alone paid an income of fifty-four millions, that is as much as the contribution obtained from the vingtièmes; in which the population of the kingdom was from time to time diminished by famine; in which the physicians sent to Montargis, to examine into an epidemic there, discovered that the whole country was sick from inanition, and cured it by distributing broth, rice and bread.§

The rays of the sun combining with the waters of the sea, produce salt, and it is this product so necessary for the nourishment of men and animals, that the King of France alone had the right to sell at twelve times its value, must we be astonished if smuggling was then for so many thousand men the only resource from their misery, the sole occupation for their courage! There were in the woods but smugglers of salt exposing themselves to the galleys, and even to death,|| in order to sell salt at a lower price than the king; insulting searches were made every where; the houses of the citizens were open at all hours to the intrusions of brutal and despised surveyors; there were more than eleven thousand arrests of men, women and children; the prisons were not large enough for the number of prisoners, and were subjected by the close packing of the victims to the invasion of contagious diseases; finally tribunals, in which the judges were paid by the lessees, decided on the deposition of the surveyors who shared their spoils, and sent no less than five hundred men to the galleys annually.¶ . . . What calamities in a single tax. Why this war; why this double army of smugglers and revenue officers? [Because there were provinces like Brittany, in which salt paid no tax and others in which it paid an enormous one. In Artois, for example, salt was worth but four livres or even forty sous the quintal, whilst in Amiens, it was worth seventy-two livres,** because Amiens was a country, subject to the great gabel, and Artois was a free province. The same quantity

* Declaration of the 7th July, 1766.

† Edict of February, 1760.

‡ Saint Simon, t. 9.

§ Marquis Ducrest, administration des finances, p. 120.

|| Declaration of the 6th of July, 1704.

¶ Mémoire de Calonne aux notables.—Necker accuses them of but three hundred in 1784.

** Necker, administration des finances, t. 2, p. 13.

of salt which cost eight livres in lower Auvergne, a redeemed country, cost thirty-four livres in high Auvergne, which was subject to the small gabel. A strange kingdom in which iniquity was complicated in such disorder, and in which equality did not exist even in oppression.

What a prime offering to the audacity of the smuggler were those monstrous differences in prices! What fascination from the hope of so rapid gain. The gabel was thus always present in the minds of the people. In the exempt countries they hoped to realize a profit from the clandestine transportation of salt; in the countries subject to the gabel, they thought only of procuring salt by smuggling, and of ridding themselves of a crushing impost. Children heard their families complain daily of the rigors of the gabel, curse the law, the magazines, the officers; and the first thought of the country child, as soon as he could travel about, was to exercise himself in that smuggling which offered him with the enticement of gain, the attraction of danger.

When it falls upon consumption, taxation leaves at least to the consumer the faculty of escaping from it by a privation more or less severe. It was different with the salt tax. Here, privation was condemned, economy was impossible. The ordinance having made the consumption of salt obligatory, every person, above seven years of age, was compelled to buy seven pounds of salt from the royal magazine, under the barbarous name of the *salt of the duty*;^{*} still they could not employ it in gross saltings, for those seven pounds were only for the *pot and salt cellar*. But through one of those unheard of contradictions which shine out in this beautiful system, whilst the inhabitant of the country of the gabelle was forced to consume more salt than he needed, the inhabitants of the ransomed countries could not obtain what they wanted free from the tax. The one was prohibited from asking for it, the other from refusing to take it.†

The duty of the gabel was so rigorous that, with the exception of nobles and priests, the citizens were constrained to it bodily. And yet must it be said, that when on certain days, at certain hours, the doors of the salt magazine were opened to the crowding citizens, a thousand disgraceful pilferings occurred, owing to the number of purchasers and their anxieties. The hopper or funnel which received the salt to pour it through the neck into the measure, was never filled from fear lest the weight should press the salt down, and pack it; for the same reason, when the measurer was filling the hopper, the valve remained closed.‡ Accustomed to artifices, the officer proceeded to pour it out with such precautions as that the salt might sustain itself so as to leave voids in the measure. These dishonest manœuvres exercised on a large scale, produced a profit, which was called, in the style of the lease, *le bon de masse*. The men who shared the fruits of so many repeated robberies with the surveyors, were the judges of the salt magazines, pitiless magistrates, armed with atrocious laws. "It is our will, says the ordinance, that those who shall

^{*} Title 6 of the ordinance about the gabel of 1680.

† Title 16 of the ordinance of the gabel of 1680.

‡ L'Antifinancier, p. 54. Amsterdam, 1763. This work was by Darigand, an advocate of the parliament, who had been a surveyor in the leases. See Bachaumont.

be seized, having smuggled salt, or trading in it, be condemned, to wit, armed smugglers to the galleys for nine years, and a fine of five hundred livres; and in case of a second offence, to be hung and strangled.*

There were, however, some exceptions to those laws of the gabelle; were they for the poor? By no means, but for great lords, members of parliament and courtiers. The king made gratuitous distributions of salt to his favorites which were called *francs-salés*; and through a refinement in baseness, the dignitaries who received these alms affected to glory in them. As they had attached an idea of degradation to the *taille*, so they did that of honor to the *franc-salé*.† It is true that, on sallying forth from such distributions, the courtier might meet an unfortunate family defending some sheaves of corn which the children had gleaned, against the officers, and to the stranger who asked the cause of so much rigor, he might have replied; this family being too poor to salt its food, they have decreed a constraint, on account of the salt they ought to consume, and do not.

It appears as if financiers had wished to make our country expiate the favors which nature has lavished on it. France, whose temperate climate produced the best salt in the world, was in the last century the country in which salt was the dearest.‡ The blessings of heaven, misconstrued, were everywhere turned to the injury of the kingdom. Thus the shores of the sea are only fit for pasturage, and beasts were prohibited from approaching them for fear lest they might drink gratuitously of the salt water. Salt is as salutary for animals as for man; it renders the milk of cows more abundant, and the wool of sheep finer,—but its extreme dearness forced the peasants to deprive their beasts of this nourishment, and the moist lands of a manure which is excellent for them. There are cantons in Provence, in which nature forms salt of itself; the farmers of the gabel sent guards there every year called the *black band*, who watched over it, lest the rains should dissolve and carry off this natural wealth.§ Finally, France produces the most varied and best wines of any country in the world, and yet the tax of *aides* was so intolerable, especially since the ordinance of Louis the Fourteenth, that the vine-dressers, discouraged and in debt, tore up the vines, and reduced three-fourths of the kingdom to drink water only. According to the testimony of Bois-Guilbert, he travelled eight leagues in one neighbourhood without finding enough to allay his thirst.||

It is here impossible to hide entirely from the eyes of the reader the dark legislation of the *aides*. It is like a vast machine whose innumerable wheels increase in an obscurity favorable to oppression. The financiers themselves understood it only very imperfectly, but the rapacious fancy of

* Ordonnance des gabelles, titre 17, art. 3.

† Necker, administration des finances, t. 2, p. 24.

‡ Memoire sur les impositions t. 3. p. 58. Composed by order of the Court of France. 1769. Royal Press.

§ Letroane, administration provinciale, p. 143. in 4.

|| Detail de la France, p. 197 of the edition of Guillaumin. M. Henri Martin in the fourteenth volume of his history of France, has vigorously refuted the historical assertions of Bois-Guilbert; but this latter writer, though a little passionate, no less maintains his authority for purely economical facts.

the agents of the lease was there to supply the insufficiency of their knowledge. And as if to add still to this obscurity, the lessees had invented a barbarous language whose meaning was only comprehensible, when it was translated in cruel exactions.

Wine had to bear such a quantity of taxes before reaching the consumer, that it cost the people an exorbitant price, without having indemnified the vine grower for its culture and his advances. Six weeks after the vintage, the surveyors visited the vaults, cellars and presses, took an inventory of the wines, confiscated those of which they had not been notified, and as one person could only consume the quantity fixed by the regulations, a kind of servitude perhaps unexampled in the history of oppressed ignorance, the employee of the lease exacted for the surplus, the payment of the wholesale duty, under the name of *gros manquant*. The inhabitants of cities were equally exercised, that is to say, subjected to the same perquisitions, and if they exceeded the amount permitted for consumption, it was taken for granted to have been fraudulently sold, and on this pure supposition they paid the retail tax, which was called *trop bu*.*

The taxes of *aides* on every thing like wine, beer and liquors only, increased, modified, doubled, accumulated under different reigns, sometimes suppressed, always restored, present a frightful nomenclature. The commodity could not be moved without buying permission and paying it.† On entering and leaving cities, on entering certain provinces, on the roads, under the bridges, in the inns and taverns, every where and at each step, the hogshead of wine encountered surveyors charged to levy taxes for the wholesale sale and for improvement, old five sous, and new five sous, of subsidy, of fourths, of the octroi of cities, of gratuity. . . . What did I say? inspectors of drinking, whose office it was to levy several sous on the livre,‡ lieutenants of the lease who collected the twelve deniers from the keepers, brokers who were connoisseurs to taste the wine, receiving three to ten sous a hogshead, gaugers to measure the cask on the payment of the five sous, still other brokers and other gaugers, who by the strange revolutions of the treasury, arrogated to themselves new taxes still under the same name.§

Beer was equally subjected to visits and controls, it was tasted by tryers who received thirty-five sous a hogshead; and thus under the pretext of protecting the consumers by the supervision of the state, they weighed upon them in a thousand modes, proving well that they had after all but a moderate care for their interests, when they repressed the offices by successive ordinances, continuing to levy the prerogative for the benefit of the king.

But why is it that we so frequently find the history of present calamities in the recital of past evils? What is then the secret power which gives so long a duration to injustice, and by what invisible force do the most execrated evils then maintain themselves? After so many battles fought by our fathers both in the fields of thought and on the land which they

* L'Anti financier, p. 10.

† Letters patent of the 18th of February 1723.

‡ Decree of the Council of the 24th of March, 1637.

§ Declaration of the 16th of October, 1689.

have watered with their blood, must the poor man be always yoked alone to the car, borne down under the same burden, stricken with the same blows; why in fine under names which vary unceasingly, does not old oppression change?

Retail taxes forming the most considerable part of the product of the *aides*, and being collected pint by pint,* it is upon the common people that the principal burden here falls, and it was the same with the other taxes, included in the farming out of the *aides*. Then as now the taxes upon meat called inspections of the shambles, were the same for unequal qualities; the rich had this privilege, that fresh fish paid the same tax as salt; the wine for sumptuous tables the same as the common wine of the people.†

The moral side of the impost of *aides* was the worst. It induced a hatred of the state and a constant desire to defraud it. There was an incessant dispute along the route of the internal barriers of the kingdom. Of two hundred and fifty thousand men who were commissioned to levy all kinds of imposts, twenty-seven thousand were employed in tormenting the citizens, diving into their houses and cellars, sounding their casks and counting their bottles. And what snares were held out to the tax-payers, what tricks practised on them. Now a travestied spy, a false beggar came groaning to ask for a glass of wine, then to signalize the charitable citizen as a seller; now they discovered contraband commodities in the house of an honest man, which the guards had concealed there. The fraud came from those who should have repressed it.

Every country in the world shuts up the confines of its territories. It was reserved for France to establish custom-houses in the interior, to render the provinces strangers to each other, to keep them in a state of reciprocal hostility, to raise, if we may so speak, Pyrennees through the kingdom. Such a state of disorder was offensive to the mind of Colbert. With the intent of one day driving back the custom-houses to the frontiers, he was desirous of rendering his formidable and famous tariff of 1664, uniform, but about one half of France having refused to obey it, formed *provinces reputed foreign*, the other half composed the *provinces of the five gross farms*, and the difference in language answering to the measures which disfigured the country, they called by the strange name of *Effective Foreigner*, Alsace, Lorraine, the three bishoprics which communicate freely with Germany, as well as the free ports, such as Marseilles, Dunkirk, Bayonne, l'Orient.‡

We no longer know the meaning of those phrases which, before the revolution, served to distinguish the different taxes paid at the provincial custom-houses. A strange thing, they had displayed more genius in shackling commerce, than would have been required to facilitate it. We may be astonished and smile at the number of grave men who have employed their lives in arranging, in alphabetical order, in folio volumes, all the merchandize of the world from aloes to veronica, from alabaster to zinc, and in seeking patiently what duty should be

* *Mémoire sur les Impositions en France*, t. 3. p. 406.

† Darigand, *Anti-financier*, p. 17.

‡ Ordinance of 1687, titre 1. art. 8.

levied on the traffic* in these matters; but how can we conceive that in the bosom of the same country, among Frenchmen, the exchange of commodities and their transportation should have found themselves beset with numerous obstacles, or dream that the sovereign thought he was laboring thereby for his own advantage?

Our rivers and streams were paths dreaded by the merchants. On the banks of the Loire for example, were raised a number of offices, in which the officers waited for the traveller to put him to ransom, levying on him passage money in the name of the state and tolls in that of communities or of lords. Forbonnais informs us that from Saint Rambert en Forez to Nantes, were no less than twenty-eight toll houses, and the wealthy Abbey of Fontevranet imposed tolls each year during fifteen days in January and fifteen in May.† Frightful surprises, sometimes pure fancies of force, were the origin of most of these taxes. The constable Lesdiguières, of his own authority, had established the custom-house of Valence on the Rhine, for the maintenance of his troops; it was kept up for two centuries notwithstanding the clamors of commerce. "This subsidy," they said, "had the birth and growth of a crocodile, and in a short time it became the terror of those merchants who travelled by water, as well as of those who went by land. The alarmed merchants shunned it as they would a cut-throat place. If they fell into it, they made them languish there whole weeks before making a composition with them for payment, and their liberty was not restored to them, until they had seen the bottom of their bales and their purses."‡ But a single trait is enough to paint the senseless tyranny of the provincial custom-houses. Commodities from China or Japan, after having travelled three or four thousand leagues and escaped tempests and pirates, cost in France but three or four times as much as they did in China or Japan; whilst a measure of wine passing from Orleans into Normandy, became at least twenty times dearer; being worth a sou in Orleans, it brought twenty and even twenty-four sous in Normandy; so that the provincial custom-houses were six times more terrible to the trade in liquors, than were tempests and pirates, and almost the whole ocean to traverse.§

We may judge now, how disastrous was the situation of the people before the revolution. What was to be done to change it? And what principle was to become the aim of the thinkers?

Above the apartments of Madame de Pompadour, at Versailles, there was an obscure room, in which lived the physician of the favorite, Francis Quesnay, an educated and ingenious man, who passed his life in meditating on agriculture, in calculating its products, and who aspired to found a new science on his calculations. In his contracted apartment, and whilst at his feet were progressing intrigues of politics and love, Quesnay assembled the philosophers of the time at his table:

* Necker, *administration des finances*, t. 2, p. 182.

† Letrosne, *administration provinciale*, p. 188.

‡ Speech of a deputy from Lyons to the Estates of Dauphiny, in Forbonnais *Recherches sur les finances*, t. 1, p. 41.

§ *Factum de la France* by Bois Guillebert, p. 312, of the edition Guillaumin.

Diderot, d'Alembert, Helvetius, Buffon, friends who would soon become his disciples, and a man, who in his turn would be the master, Turgot.*

Brought up in the country, Quesnay had carefully analyzed what was passing before his eyes, and had preserved recollections which gave a grace and coloring to his discourses, which are wanting in his writings. The authority of his word, his experience fructified by meditation, the novelty of his perceptions, or rather of his definitions, the systematic turn of his mind, procured for him proselytes whom his modesty made his admirers. He soon formed a school around his sofa, which was to fill the second half of the eighteenth century with agitation and noise. Foreseeing adepts in his visitors, he now received them singly in order to indoctrinate them, and now assembling them together with a mild gravity, he exposed to them theories which were to have an incalculable influence on the march of the revolution, and of which the following is the substance:†

Man lives by material products. From whence does he derive them? From the earth. Then it is *matter* which constitutes the essential character of wealth and the *earth* is its true source.

But what is necessary to render the earth serviceable to man?

First, fields fit for culture, buildings for the laborers, stables for the horses, warehouses for the fruits. These are the *landlord's advances*.

What is still necessary? Beasts, ploughs, various farming instruments, seed. These are the *primitive advances*.

Is this all? Are there not a thousand costly labors to provide, to sow, to cultivate, to harvest? Must not agricultural laborers and domestic animals be fed? These are the *annual advances*.

Of these three kinds of *advances*, alike productive, since their concurrence gives birth to the harvest, the first are made by the proprietor, the two last by the cultivator.

Let us now suppose the harvest gathered; will you not be obliged to spend to procure a new one what you have spent in procuring this? Will there not be required a sum equal at least to that of the past year for seed, for food, for animals, for wages, for workmen? And to this sum will it not be required to add another for damaged ploughs, for the renewal of tools deteriorated by long use, or to replace a worn out horse? There are then to be deducted from the present harvest with a view to a future one: 1st. The sum total of the *annual advance*. 2d. The charges for the *primitive advances*. These are the resumptions of the cultivator.

The excess is the interest of the *landlord's advances*, is the revenue of the proprietor, is the *nett product*.

The resumptions of the cultivator cannot be touched by taxation without striking a mortal blow at the future harvest; for if the expenses which the culture requires are diminished, it will suffer, and if the lawful products of the cultivator are too much reduced, he will fly the country and seek for employment in the cities. It is a product which

* Memoires de Marmontel, t. 2. p. 28, 34. Memoires of Madame du Hausset.

† This is an exact summary of the doctrines of Quesnay and his disciples, Mercier de la Rivière, Letrosne, Baudeau, etc.

should be truly free, truly disposable, and the whole impost* should fall on the revenue of the proprietor, the *nett product*.

But let us be careful ; if the nett product, attacked by taxation, ceases to be large enough to interest the proprietor in the cultivation of the soil, it would soon happen that capital would desert agriculture ; that cultivated fields would give place to heaths and deserts ; that the great source of the enjoyments, the wealth, the life of nations would be dried up. From whence arises this consequence, that the increase of the nett product is the most elevated end that the wisdom of governments can propose to itself. That they should not then fear to push articles of subsistence† to dearth. The high price of provisions will enrich the proprietor ; the proprietor, become rich, will attach himself to the soil ; the land, better cultivated, will multiply its gifts and abundance will spread by means of exchanges over the whole nation, the workman in manufactories will have higher wages to pay for his dearer bread.

Such were the first deductions of Quesnay, and it is already easy to foresee the bearing of a doctrine apparently so simple and so candid. What ! the process of salvation which was to be vaunted as the discovery of a benevolent and tutelary genius was, to render corn dearer. It was the high price of food which was to make the poor man live, by just keeping him from dying. They affirmed to the people, that if the bread began to become dearer, their labor would terminate in being more largely paid for ; but what was to be their condition during the time required for the equilibrium to establish itself ? And yet admitting a very controvertible thing, that the height in price was to be compensated by an exactly equivalent height in wages, to what should this compensation be reduced for the unfortunate man, who wanting work, receives no wages, for the laborer struck with a sudden infirmity, for the sick man ? Quesnay forgot that the figures here placed in line by him represented men, and that there are situations in which a high price of bread is a decree of death. Thus what clamors arose when the secret of the new school was finally divulged. A bad judge of causes, according to Galiani, but having a grand knowledge of effects, the people trembled at losing what it was proposed that the proprietors should gain. They were distrustful of a theory which annihilated the bonds which bind mankind together, and whose spirit was betrayed in imprudent, irreparable words ; cultivators alone form a *productive class* ; the rest a *sterile class*.

The physician of Louis the Fifteenth was bound to arrive at this conclusion from his principle. Having declared that the earth was the only source of wealth, he was led on to admit no other *productive class* than that of cultivators. The artisan, the merchant, the physician, the philosopher, the man of learning, the artist, . . . a *sterile class*.‡

It is very true that, for Quesnay and his school, the word here surpassed the measure of the thought. They were careful how they slighted the utility of different functions, which their vocabulary appeared to con-

* Quesnay, *Maximes Generales*, see taxation not destructive.

† Ibid. *Maxims* 18 and 19.

‡ Quesnay, *Dialogues sur le Commerce et les travaux des artisans*. Collection of Economists, Edit. Daire chez Guillaumin.

denn ; but this utility they thought secondary, in an economical point of view. One of them, perhaps the most sprightly, wrote to Madame de *** in explanation of the catechism of the school :—" You see, Madame, the productions of all climates and of the two hemispheres assembled before your eyes and beneath your hands at a simple breakfast. China has formed those cups and that plate ; the coffee was born in Arabia ; the sugar with which you season it was cultivated in America ; the metal of your coffee-pot came from Potosi ; that linen brought from Riga, was fashioned by the industry of Holland ; our country has furnished you only with bread and cream."* And after having shown the universe administering, in consequence of the prodigies of manufactures and commerce, to the breakfast of a lady, the author contented himself with calling agreeable and judged as worthy of still higher pay, services which represented a thousand obstacles surmounted, innumerable dangers met with courage, an energy sometimes deceived, but always powerful, seas triumphantly traversed, nature conquered.

If it is asked upon what the absolute pre-eminence granted by Quesnay and his disciples to cultivators was founded, here it is :—

" Whilst the artisan is laboring, they said, the philosopher meditating, the merchant travelling after riches, and the artist occupying himself in charming our life, must they not subsist ? From whom comes the means of subsistence, if not from the earth ? The earth then nourishes those who do not cultivate it with the excess left disposable from the support of those who do cultivate it. Then this excess, this *nett product*, serves to pay for all the labors of manufactures, commerce and the mind. The proprietor, the possessor of the nett revenue, is the true dispenser of the largesses of nature, the distributor of the treasures of the earth, the supreme cashier of industry. Who other than the creator of the nett product or the cultivator has a right to the honors of the production ? The artisan doubtless adds a value to the material that he fashions, but what matters that, if he consumes an equal value whilst he is at work ? He alone then deserves the name of producer who creates it at once for himself and others. And such is precisely the cultivator, since he draws from the bosom of the earth his own subsistence first and above that, the *nett product*, that is, the price with which traffickers, artists, manufacturers, physicians, men of letters, advocates, learned men, all those who not being cultivators, form the other active part of mankind are paid, the source to which they come to draw."

Thus, the doctrine of Quesnay, which they called *PHYSIOCRATY*, the government of nature, tended to divide society into three classes, the *proprietors*, a subdivision of the *productive class*, the class of cultivators, or the *productive class*, properly so called, and finally, the *sterile class*, comprising the ensemble of artisans, merchants, artists.

Still if the physiocrats had honored with the name of producer, the unfortunate being who fatigues himself and dies in turning up the furrow in which the corn will mature. But they feared to outrage the cultivator who pays, by raising to his level the poor peasant who is paid ;

* The Abbé Beauden, Explication du Tableau Economique, § 6. p. 246. de l'Edition Daire.

and in their eyes the *productive class* was characterized even in the fields, not by labor, but by expense.

Note well this point of departure ; you will have to remember it hereafter, when after the session of the tennis court, amid the noise of the cannon firing on the Bastille and the cries of enthusiasm rising to heaven from a people who thought themselves free, the constituent assembly will divide the nation into active and inactive citizens, and will confide the interests of poverty to chance.

How enviable, how splendid, on the other side, was the part allotted by the physiocrats to the proprietor. Placed at the summit of the productive class, they supposed him to be invested with the highest of social functions ; and to fill it, he had but to enjoy his fortune. Seated alone at the festive board, his part was to consume his revenues tranquilly, whilst ranged around the table, artisans and other members of the sterile class should come to offer the fruits of their industry and talent to the master, in exchange for what he did not want.

And yet it will happen, that through a strange misconception, the proprietors became alarmed. Quesnay, they had seen, had demanded that all the taxes should be replaced by a single land tax. They did not perceive but that side of a theory which inflated their importance immeasurably, gave them a pompous idleness, and tended to replace the old military aristocracy by a rustic aristocracy. It escaped them that Quesnay had intended to make industry pay indirectly, through the high price of commodities, that increase of taxation by which their revenues appeared to be threatened. They uttered a general cry of alarm, and the wealthy Voltaire wrote his tale of the *man with forty crowns*, against the physiocrates.

On the other side, the emotion was general, both among such financiers as Forbonnais, and such partisans of equality as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Mably. Born in a republic without a territory, and which had grown rich by making watches, Necker was disposed by study for the combat ; and the physiocrats had to account with that Italian Abbé, that Galiani, whose laugh was almost as formidable as that of Voltaire. The lists were about to open ; they sprung into them in crowds. Some entered them, led by a fine disposition ; others, from a secret desire for agitation, and some from a passionate dread of results. For at the bottom, they were desirous of knowing, if, the old aristocracy once down, a new one would be submitted to ; if, in accepting the division of society into *productive and sterile classes*, there would be permitted to be introduced into the language formularies contrary to the doctrine of human connection ; if, thanks to the entirely unforeseen and strange apotheosis of the *NETT PRODUCT*, idle opulence would be permitted to install itself instead of honor in the government of societies. Thus the attack was active and pressing.

"From whence springs," they exclaimed to the physiocrats, "this hardihood to insult the majesty of intellect and the fecundity of industry by arbitrary distinctions ? No, wealth does not consist alone in the material, it is in the material appropriated to the wants and enjoyments of man, and marked with his impress. Would wheat be wealth to us, if

human industry did not make bread of it? The marriage of labor and man, the union of materials and labor is what creates wealth. You avow that the labors of manufactures, commerce, the intellect, are of great utility; you are not displeased that they should be encouraged, honored, and if need be, admired, . . . and yet whosoever does not expend himself with a view to a direct improvement of the soil, is rejected by you into the *sterile class*. Your doctrine rolls but on vain subtleties of language, or plays on words; where it has a serious signification, it is evidently false. What! was he of the productive class who extracted from the quarry the block of marble destined for the chisel of Phidias, and Phidias was of the sterile class. Behold a field through which the plough passes to fructify it; and should the proprietor, who has not made the field, better deserve the name of producer than the smith who has made the plough? Put the producers, you say, on one side, and the fashioners on the other. And do you not see that in reality agricultural labor is but a fashioning given to the earth? Agriculture is the manufacture of the soil, as fishing is the manufacture of the sea. If you wish to go to the bottom of things there are only fashioners here below; the true producer is God."

But the physiocrats enjoyed a reputation at court which animated them to the strife. Madame de Pompadour bestowed her powerful friendship on their master, and Louis the Fifteenth protected them by his carelessness. When at the end of 1758, Quesnay published his *Tableau Economique*, the first proofs were drawn by the king's own hands.* Quesnay soon had ardent and devoted pens at his service. Blow on blow and without speaking of the Marquis of Mirabeau, for whom we shall reserve a separate place, Mercier de la Rivière published the *Natural Order of Political Societies*, and Dupont de Nemours *Physiocracy*, which was to follow, at an interval of some years, the treatise on the *Social Interest* by Letrosne; heavy and dull works which would have illy served the doctrine, if it had not escaped from books to spread itself abroad in pamphlets. Quesnay had been among the first to salute in public opinion the sovereignty of modern times. One day a placeman having said before him, *it is the halbert which manages a kingdom—and who manages the halbert?* replied the philosopher.† The physiocrats wished then to have journals, and they had them.

Another school was however formed. As devoted to commerce as the physician of Madame Pompadour was to agriculture, M. de Gournay, the intendant of commerce, had observed one by one all the phenomena engendered by the old system of prohibitions, custom-houses, privileges and maitrises. He had seen the manufacturer striving against the text of the ordinances, the merchant at war with the treasury, the workman beneath the yoke of the corporations. What laws, statutes and regulations was it not required to know or consult before making a piece of stuff? If it were not cut regularly three ells square, if it had not the determinate

* Dupont de Nemours, Notice sur les Economists, printed at the beginning of the *Eloge de Gournay*, by Turgot. Edit. Guillaumin.

† Eugene Daire, Notice sur la vie et les travaux de Quesnay, p. 16. Collection of Physiocrats.

length and breadth, if it surpassed the appointed number of threads, there were immediately fines and lawsuits. . . And what suits were those in which a manufacturer who did not know how to read, was judged by an inspector who did not know how to manufacture ?* The principal commercial nations, England and Holland, had long broken these barriers regarded by them as the last remains of barbarism ; and Gournay, who now travelling for improvement, and now as a merchant for profit, had been enabled to contemplate the greatest commerce in the world transacting before his eyes, from Cadiz to Hamburg, had imbibed from his long experience a hatred of the principle of authority in matters of political economy. A formulary was necessary for this empire of individualism which was about to be inaugurated ; Gournay found it ; **LET ALONE, LET PASS.**

And in fact, the chief of the physiocrats had in his famous treatise of the *net product*, reached the conclusion of absolute freedom to the proprietor. He wished, that the proprietor, who was burthened with all the taxes, might raise the price of provisions at his caprice, put them in storehouses instead of selling them, carry his gain abroad,† finally use and abuse his liberty without any corrective or any limit, except the liberty of other proprietors, that is **COMPETITION.**

Thus two men starting from different points, the one brought up on a farm, the other in a counting-house, after having travelled separately through the domain of reflection, met suddenly at a certain handpost by the way, on which was written the word *liberty*. This word they set themselves to work to understand well. How many misfortunes might have been spared the people, if it had been defined by fraternity, without which the weak only becomes free through neglect. But the principle of authority had so tried the world that the thinkers were almost all aiming at the victory of the opposite principle, the pure and simple enfranchisement of the individual. Proprietor or merchant, rich or poor, man was to be surrendered to himself. He was thought to know his own interest better than any one else, and they opened a space for this pride, this passion of private interest. No more superintendents, keepers, barriers, we might add, tutelage. The individual was his own master : **LET ALONE, LET PASS.**

These two schools then made but one, and taking the name of *Economists*, they marched under friendly flags‡ to the double triumph of burgherism, by means of agriculture and commerce.

A man in the eighteenth century sums up the economists ; it is Turgot ; and a book sums up their doctrines, it is the treatise of Turgot on the *formation and distribution of wealth*.

We should seek in vain in this treatise for some of those new views, those unexpected traits by which the conquests of a powerful mind are revealed. A respectful disciple of Quesnay, if Turgot were himself, as we have said, honored with the title of master, he owed it solely to the esteem which his character inspired, and the dignity of his life. But the historical importance of his writings consists justly in the fidelity with which

* Eloge de Gournay, par Turgot, t. 1. des Œuvres, p. 268.

† Maximes Générales.

‡ Notice sur les Economistes, Dupont de Nemours.

they reproduced the tendencies, ideas, and sophistries of one school, and of that school which gave birth, in its economical relations, to the revolution of 1789.

The treatise on *the formation and distribution of wealth* did but resume the various propositions we have already reviewed, on the division of society into three classes, on the pre-eminence of agriculture, and the nature and origin of the *nett product*; we will confine ourselves then to inquiring from the book of Turgot, if the theory of the economists, gave their charter of enfranchisement to the masses.

Listen: "The mere workman, who has but his arms and his industry, has nothing but his labor to sell to others. He sells it for more or less; but this higher or lower price does not depend on himself alone; it results from the agreement he makes with him who pays for his labor. The latter pays as little as he can, and as he has a choice among a great number of laborers, he prefers him who works for the lowest price. The workmen are then obliged to lower their price from opposition to each other. In all kinds of labor it must happen, and it does happen, that the wages of the laborers are limited to what is necessary to procure a subsistence for them."*

Here is the phenomenon described with much exactness. It is thus, that things occur under the empire of individualism; in a society in which every one refers every thing to himself; in those lists, in which, urged on by competition, the unfortunate poor are forced to dispute for labor as for a prey, even to the risk of self-destruction. But are there not disorder, injustice, and violence in all this? When the strong are on one side, and the weak on the other, is not the liberty of the strong the immolation of the weak? Profound questions, and which Turgot carefully avoids. Turgot had the misfortune to adopt that principle, in which is found in our days this cowardly and cruel formula, *each one for himself*, and the principle once admitted, if the consequences are bad, what is to be done? It must happen when individual right is taken for the point of departure, that the workman is reduced to strict necessities; but would it be so under a regime of fraternal association?

Turgot proves clearly, that the labor of slaves produces little, because the slave has not enough interest in the success of the work;† and he forgets this consideration, when he speaks of the labor of the free workman, free in law, but a slave in misery. He is not moved that there is a flagrant and unjust inequality in the divisions of labor and rewards, under the blind dictatorship of the let-alone system; he sees in it but the natural result of the course of things; he describes it and appears to be afraid to judge it.

Nothing is more lively and in better keeping than the manner in which Turgot enumerates and values the services of capital in industrial pursuits.‡ But like all the school that he represents, he establishes an entirely arbitrary and false confusion between capital and the capitalist, in order to reach this conclusion, that the necessity for the one draws after it the lawful sovereignty of the other. Besides, if capital is indis-

* *Reflexions sur la formation et la distribution des richesses*, § 6.

† *Ibid.* § 23.

‡ *Ibid.* § 61.

pensable, is labour less so? If capital expresses the wealth of to-day, is it not labor which shall extract that of to-morrow? And when he tells you that the wages of the laborer should be but sufficient to keep him from dying. . . . is it from a defect of pure reason, that your heart has nothing to reply? Singular and sad logical conclusions of an erroneous or incomplete system. Turgot, a man of property, was led by his principle to the theory of usury. It might be conceived, moreover, that he would have proclaimed the right of the lender by deriving it from social utility; but no, this right appeared to him to be so absolute, so independent of all idea of public good and fraternal duty, that he did not wish to give the service rendered to the borrower as a motive for lending at interest.* That the lender had a right to raise the level of his exactions at his pleasure, it *was enough* that the money belonged to him.

How much nobler and more worthy of an elevated genius are these beautiful words of Law. "Money is only yours, by the title which gives you the right of calling for it, and passing it through your hands, to satisfy your wants and your desires; beyond this, the use of it belongs to your fellow citizens, and you cannot frustrate them of it without committing an injustice and a state crime."

Let us examine closely the two doctrines, and decide between them. We must tell the whole. Turgot proclaimed *the right of laboring* in magnificent terms. This will be, in future times, one of his titles of honor. Before the fall of a regime in which they had dared to make a demesial and royal privilege of labor, it was doing much to place it in the number of imprescriptible properties.

Do not be deceived, however. Turgot never went so far as to recognize *the right to labor*. He wished the poor to be left to develop their faculties freely, but he did not admit that society owed them the means of attaining to it. He understood well that the obstacles which might spring from the action of authority should be suppressed, but he did not impose on the state the obligation to serve as a tutor to the poor, the weak and the ignorant. In a word, it was *the right of laboring, and not the right to labor, which he admitted*. Capital distinction—and one whose depths have not been yet sufficiently dug.

What was the use of saying to the poor man, "Thou hast the right of laboring," when he could reply, "How do you wish me to profit by this right? I cannot sow the earth on my own account; I found it occupied at my birth. I cannot abandon myself to hunting or fishing; it is the privilege of the proprietor. I cannot cull the fruits which the hand of God has matured along the path of men; they have been *appropriated* like the soil. I cannot cut wood or mine the iron, the necessary

* These are his own words. "The profits which may be procured with money, is beyond doubt one of the most frequent motives which determines the borrower to borrow it on interest; it is one of the sources of the facility which he finds in paying this interest; but it is not all which gives the lender the right to exact it; it is enough for that, that his money belongs to him, and this right is inseparable from property."

And a little further up, "Since the money belongs to him, he is free to keep it; nothing makes it a duty for him to lend it; and if he lends it, he can place such conditions as he pleases on the loan."

instruments of my activity; thanks to conventional agreements, to which I am not a party, this wealth, which Nature seems to have created for all, has become the share and the patrimony of the few. I cannot, then, labor without submitting to the conditions which the detainers of the instruments of labor impose upon me. If, by virtue of what you call the liberty of contracts, these conditions are excessively hard; if they exact from me the sale of my body and soul; if nothing protects me against the misfortune of my situation; or even if having no need for me, the distributors of labor repel me . . . what am I to do? Will there remain to me enough strength to applaud the fall of tyrannies to the human race, when I shall have struggled in vain against the tyranny of things? Shall I believe myself truly free, whilst the slavery of hunger shall remain for me? Will the right of laboring appear to me a very precious gift, when I shall die of want and despair in the bosom of my right?"

The right, considered abstractly, was then but a mirage, suitable to lead people into the torment of a hope always deceived. Such as the economists of the eighteenth century defined it, such as Turgot understood and proclaimed it, the right would only serve to mask the unjust and barbarous abandonment of the poor by the inauguration of individualism.

It was this definition of liberty, however, which the revolutionists of '89 adopted; but to change it, to give it a better, other revolutionists arose, and we shall hear these latter say, "Liberty consists not in the right, but in the power granted to man to exercise and develop his faculties, under the empire of justice and the safeguard of the law."

We have now seen how false and dangerous was the doctrine of the economists of the eighteenth century. We are not in a haste, however, to condemn them. They adopted the principle of individualism with blind passion, because the contrary principle, that of authority, had made a violent re-action the necessity of the epoch. When a stick has bent one way, it can only be straightened by bending it again in a contrary direction; such is the law of revolutions. Let us respect it groaning; let us acknowledge the benefit of the errors of those who have been self-deceived, if they have contributed to destroy more serious and fatal ones. But to those only is our admiration due, who, in advance of their epoch, have the glory to foresee the aurora, and the courage to salute its coming. For finally to raise an independent and bold voice when the public murmurs are against you; to attack power, which shall calumniate you, for the advantage of a crowd who do not understand nor know you; to have in yourself your encouragement, strength, hope; with an indomitable soul, and a holy avidity for justice, to go towards the end without regarding whether you are followed, and then having reached the heights from which you are to point out the way to your tardy age, to finish by living in the bitter solitude of one's own intellect and heart; this is what is worthy of eternal homage, and it is for those who are capable of such an effort, that the incense of history should smoke.

He have exposed the doctrines of Turgot; his actions were those of a virtuous citizen and a devoted administrator. Intendant of the province

of Limousin at the time when he was composing his book, he caused himself to be loved, blessed. His revenues, nobly employed, solaced the poor. He opened roads. He taught the people the advantageous use of potatoes.* He suppressed the corvée in his intendency.† But one thing cannot be too much remarked. He could not accomplish all the good to which the inspirations of his soul urged him, but by a course of conduct frequently contrary to his writings. "He combatted egotism," says one of his most ardent panegyrists, "he combatted it strongly, and even by coercive measures."‡ Was not this to go beyond the principles on which he made the rights of the lender repose? He organized poor-houses; was not this to enter upon the system of the interference of the state in matters of industry? He wrote these touching, admirable words at the head of some instructions addressed to the bureaux of charity; "the solace of those who suffer, is the duty and the affair of all;" was not this to condemn that theory of competition which makes the lot of the poor an affair of chance? Turgot was not, then, always consistent with his principles. Do not reproach him for it; it is his glory.

We may judge, now, of the efforts which were made in the eighteenth century in favor of individual rights; but the social rights did not want defenders, though much in disagreement with the general movement of minds.

Morelly had, in 1755, laid down the basis of a new social system, in a work called the *Code of Nature*. It is important to know here the principal points.

"To maintain the indivisible unity of common funds and a common residence;

"To establish the common use of instruments of labor, and of productions;

"To render education equally accessible to all;

"To distribute labor according to strength, products according to wants;

"To preserve land enough about a city to maintain the families who inhabit it;

"To unite a thousand persons at least, so that each one laboring according to his strength and his faculties, and consuming according to his wants and his taste, there is established for a sufficient number of individuals a means of consumption which does not surpass the common resources, and a result of labor which renders them always sufficiently abundant;

"To grant no other privilege to talent than that of directing the labors for the common interest, and not to keep an account in the partition, of the capacity, but only of the wants which exist above all capacity, and survive it;

* Nogaret, t. 5. p. 75. Règne de Louis Sizième.

† And Monthyon adds that they proceeded about it in an irregular manner, having used in the redemption of the corvée, the funds which were destined to discharge the impositions in favor of the tax-payers, who had suffered losses in their harvests. *Particularités sur les Ministres des Finances*, p. 181.

‡ Eugene Daire, *Notice Historique sur Turgot*, p. 44. Edit. Guillaumin.

"Not to admit pecuniary recompenses, because, 1st, the capital is an instrument of labor which should remain entirely disposable in the hands of the administration; 2d, because all compensation in money is either useless or injurious; useless in the case in which labor, freely chosen, would render the variety and abundance of the products more extensive than our wants; injurious in the case in which vocation and taste would not discharge all the useful functions; for that would be giving to individuals a means of not paying the debt of labor, and of exempting them from the duties of the society, without renouncing the rights it assures to them."*

Utopian, you are about to exclaim! The dream of a thinker who meditated aside! Morelly appears to have mixed his life up but little with the history of his times, either from fear of persecutions, or from philosophical disdain. But what is remarkable is, that his Utopia was also that of a man, who having been employed in public affairs, had displayed a rare skill in them.

Secretary to Cardinal Tencin, when he was minister, Mably had passed several years in the labor of which another was collecting the profits; he had studied the despatches of all the cabinets of Europe, conducted important negotiations, and acquired, by a long experience, the practice of power for which he seemed born. How, after having thus managed men and things, came he to embrace the worship of a social order so different from that in which he had been applauded, had shone, and whose basis he knew better than any one, was not to be easily shaken? Mably was endowed with an intellect sufficiently powerful to break the yoke of ideas received blindly and caressed since infancy. Mably had a great heart; this is the explanation. Thus you will find him, if you interrogate the souvenirs of his life, fierce within bounds, rough from honesty, despising vain distinctions, distrusting the poison of wealth, now replying to the advances of a high person, "I will see him, when he is out of place," now refusing a sofa in the academy to avoid pronouncing a lying eulogy, finally, reaching an advanced age without fortune, but without reproach, and even then economizing on a revenue of three thousand livres, to be enabled to succor the indigent, and to increase the small inheritance which his gratitude destined for an aged domestic.

Mably thought then, agreeing in that with the reason of Morelly and the sentiment of Jean-Jacques, that men are *unequal* in faculties and wants, but *equal* in rights: he thought that each of them having received from God a command to be useful and live, that all have an *equal* right to develop their faculties and to enjoy the conditions of existence. He made justice consist in exacting more from him who could do more, and in giving more to him on whom nature imposed more wants. If my strength is double, I ought to bear a double burthen. If I retain as a superfluity that which is necessary to my neighbor to enable him to exercise his right of living, I not only substitute the idea of war for the idea

* We borrow, word for word, this short and substantial analysis of the system of Morelly, from his ingenious and learned editor, Villegardelle. See the Code de la Nature, p. 14. Edit. 1841.

of the society, but I oppose the accomplishment of the divine law and am impious.*

As an application of these principles and in conformity with the system of Morelly, his forerunner, Mably, proposed the family as a model for society, the family in which the division of posts was made in accordance with the strength, and of fruits with the wants, the family in which there was a disinterested command on the part of the father, a voluntary obedience on that of the children, increased solicitude and expenses for the infirm and sick.

The family itself was in this system religiously maintained. Marriage is not in the code of Morelly, either an affair of social arrangement or a money bargain; it is an holy and inviolable union of two souls drawn towards each other. Divorce is sometimes permitted, but only after ten years of marriage and by means of certain formalities analogous to those which have since been prescribed by the civil code.† If the children receive a common education, it is at the age when it becomes necessary to fit them for the duties of society. Until then they are left to grow beneath the wing of their parents; there is nothing comparable to that which the love of a mother knows, divines and can teach. "Mothers," says Morelly, "shall suckle their own children;"‡ and the only motive that he admits to free from this duty, is an absolute and proved impossibility to discharge it.

Morelly and Mably were besides convinced, that far from rendering the hierarchy impossible, their system of fraternal accord was the only means of seating it on solid, unattackable foundations.§ What interest would mediocrity have in intriguing for the highest employments, when command should have ceased to be a source of privileges, and without producing any more profit, should impose much greater duties? No doubt each one would tend to class himself in accordance with his particular vocation and his aptitudes, where all functions would be regarded as equally honorable and be weighed in the same balance.

Was there no fear lest idleness should install itself within an association deprived of the stimulants of egotism? Morelly and Mably resolutely denied, that idleness was a vice natural to man. Idleness, says Morelly, came only "from distinctions, which casting some into sloth and softness, inspired in others a disgust and aversion for forced duties, . . . It is so true that man is a creature made for action, and for useful action; that we see that species of men who are called rich and powerful, seek the fatiguing tumult of pleasures to rid themselves of an importunate sloth."|| Why not then make a pleasure of labor by freeing it from the odious character which excess, prohibition of choice, and constraint impress upon it? They dread idleness. Well, then, let them give it the name it deserves in every free association; let them call the idler a rob-

* See the whole of chapter 2d of the *Traité de la législation ou principes des lois*, Œuvres complètes de l'Abbé de Mably, t. 9. 1792.

† Morelly, *Code de la Nature*, p. 167, et suiv.

‡ Ibid. p. 169.

§ De la législation ou principes des lois, Œuvres complètes de Mably, t. 9. chapitre.

|| *Code de la Nature*, p. 79.

ber. Would it be impossible to introduce into a workshop the point of honor so efficacious in the field of battle? Men have been led to sacrifice to honor the dearest of their property, life; and could he not be led to sacrifice to it some hours of shameful rest, and would not idleness be banished from society, when it should have become as disgraceful to recoil from labor as from before an enemy? To Mercier de la Rivière, Turgot and the whole school of economists who made the sharpness of gain the only spur to human activity, Mably opposed a remembrance of the establishment founded in Paraguay by the Jesuits.* He might have also cited the example of the *Moravian Brethren*, whose number had increased under the direction of Hutter to seventy thousand, and who, by the avowal of historians who are the detractors of Anabaptism, had formed the most active, the most fruitful family of laborers the world had ever seen.†

Whilst lost in the crowd which was rushing headlong to individualism, some courageous and convinced men thus resumed the imperishable tradition preserved through ages, by the Platonic philosophy, christianity, the Albigenses, the Vaudois, the Hussites and the Anabaptists, the doctrine which was to become dominant, met skilful and furious adversaries in the defenders of pure despotism. The economical school which Morelly and Mably attacked in the name of fraternity, Linguet attacked in the name of a system whose result would have been oriental slavery. Nothing could be more odious than the political ideal of Linguet, nothing better conducted than his war on the economists. We will judge of it by the following passage. "The slave was maintained when he did not labor. But the free laborer, who is frequently badly paid when he does work, what is to become of him when he does not work? Who is there to trouble himself about his lot? Whom does it cost any thing when he perishes of languor and misery? Who is there consequently, who is interested in hindering him from perishing? . . . The slave was precious to his master, on account of the money he had cost him. But the free laborer costs the rich voluptuary who employs him nothing. In times of servitude the blood of men, had some price; they were worth at least what they sold for in the market. Since they are no longer sold, they have really no intrinsic value. In an army, a pioneer is much less esteemed than a wagon horse, because the wagon horse is dear, and they can get the pioneer for nothing. The suppression of slavery has made this calculation of war pass into common life, and since that period, there are no wealthy burghers who do not calculate in the same manner the heroes do."‡

But it was still too soon for fraternity, and it was too late for despotism. In vain were the socialist ideas of the eighteenth century served by Jeah-Jacques Rousseau in his *Social Contract*, by Helvetius himself, in certain passages of his *Treatise on Man*, by Diderot, in some of his fine inspirations. Individualism was invading society irresistibly. Mably

* Notes proposées aux philosophes économistes sur l'ordre naturel et essentiel des sociétés. Œuvres complètes de Mably, t. 2. lettre 1.

† Histoire des Anabaptistes, by Catron, liv. 4. p. 130, Paris, 1706.

‡ Linguet, Théories des lois civiles, liv. 5. chap. 30.

perceived it himself, and every page of his writings* proves, that he was under no illusion as to the power of the ideas combatted by him.

How could he be deceived? Celebrated philosophers, applauded literary men, grave magistrates, most of the encyclopedists, ministers, prelates, such had been the earliest economists. There were seen among them, and by the side of Turgot, of Mercier de la Rivière, of Dupont de Nemours, and of Letrosne, the cardinal of Boisgelin, M. de Malesherbes, M. de Cicé, the archbishop of Bourdeaux, the two Trudaines, the old minister d'Invaux, the illustrious chemist Lavoisier, the abbé Raynal, Saint-Perazy, and the indefatigable skirmishers of this new army, the ardent journalist Baudeau, the abbé Morellet, and finally the abbé Roubaud, to whom Voltaire wrote, "I have as boundless an esteem for you as, in your opinion, the liberty of commerce should be."† For Voltaire who had need of supports, was not long in asking pardon by ingenious flatteries for *the man with the forty crowns*. Better understood, the doctrine of the economists had nothing about it alarming to the Lord of Ferney, who said, after Turgot, "the majority should live by their own labor."‡

Let us not forget that the economical school was directed or upheld by nobles, great lords, even sovereigns. The Marquis of Condorcet, the chevalier de Jaucourt, Turgot, sprung from one of the oldest families of Normandy, the Marquis of Mirabeau, these were they who pushed the French feudality to its definite fall amidst the applauses of the Chancellor of Lithuania, the Grand Duke of Baden, Lord Lansdowne, the Archduke Leopold and the Emperor Joseph the Second.§

As it happens in growing schools, in which they recompense themselves by pride, for not yet having the empire, what was but a very controvertible doctrine was called SCIENCE; they saluted the physician of Madame de Pompadour only as the MASTER; and the apostles of the let-alone system gave the tone of haughty intolerance to their polemics. They had moreover, since the commencement, displayed a laudable activity in uprooting the prejudices which held labor captive, in unmasking the farmers of the revenue, in glorifying agriculture, in defending the people of the cities who were excluded from the jurandes, or imposed upon by them, and the people of the country who were crushed by taxes, and driven without pay and bread, to mend the public roads. Books, pamphlets, periodicals, every thing was employed by the sect to gain definitively that sovereign, and already grumbling power, public opinion. The same year (1765) saw the *Journal of Agriculture* conducted by Dupont de Nemours and the abbé Roubaud, and the *Diary of a Citizen*, which scarcely founded against the economists, was placed at their service by the abbé Baudeau, an adversary suddenly converted.|| Impatient to exhibit itself, the doctrine assumed all forms. Saint Lambert lent it the language of poetry in the *Seasons*; it glided on the stage, in the

* See especially chap. 4, de la Legislation, liv. 1.

† Correspondance de Voltaire, t. 22. lettre 742.

‡ Voltaire, Siècle de Louis Fourteenth.

§ Notice of Dupont de Nemours serving as a preamble to the eulogy on Gournay, *Œuvres de Turgot*, t. 2. Collect. Guillaumin.

|| Notice sur l'abbé Baudeau, par Eugene Darie, Coll. Guillaumin.

drama* of Albert the First; and it reached the personages of the comic operas of Favart,† who were commissioned to render the maxims of the *Economical Tableau* popular.

But a writer who has survived under the name of the *Friend of Man*, it was the title of his first work, the Marquis de Mirabeau, the father of the famous orator, had already spread abroad profusely in a succession of books, greedily sought after, both the ideas of Quesnay and his own, well ranged beneath the discipline of the master. *The oldest son of the doctrine*, as he called himself,‡ he had been its most turbulent propagator, and had had the honor of presiding over the meetings of the economists. He received them every Tuesday at his table, and his character responded perfectly to his part. Passionately devoted to agriculture, a patron of the peasant, he was himself a rustic noble, a kind of country squire, who spoke with kindness of the poor people, though full of the pride of his race. "For five hundred years," he said, "have Mirabeaus been suffered who were not made like other men," and without doubt to distinguish himself as much as his ancestors, he affected simplicity in the midst of embroidered coats. He fulminated against the *conquests of the inkstand*, so proud himself of having composed fifty volumes.§ A paradoxical and lively humorist, he inflated his style with hyperboles and neologisms, rather than write like everybody else. He piled up so much strangeness in his ideas and phrases, that he would have covered the science of the economists with ridicule, if, on the other hand, his works had not been lively, full of a true originality, sown with happy fancies and lightnings. His very defects were useful to the doctrine, and brought it into vogue, so much relief was there in his confused books, in which, stirring up every thing, without enlightening any thing, he now sustained the small against the great, now the great against the *burghers*; he loaded with contumely, courtiers who beg in red heels and only boast of their former nobility, which he shows us drinking too much, sleeping a little, playing at tennis, or practising in the fencing schools, on horseback early in the morning for the hunt, and leading a hard, rustic and loyal life.||

The Marquis of Mirabeau would have been almost a man of genius, if he had had method in his head, but in the second generation this chaos was cleared up, and from it sprung the greatest orator of modern times.

The Amphictryon of the economists, the Marquis of Mirabeau, was truly their eldest born. He had agitated all their ideas, before them, in his books. At the very time that Quesnay was giving to the *Encyclopedia* his celebrated articles on *Grains and Farmers*, Mirabeau had published his treatise of population, *the Friend of Man*,¶ and already

* Played on the 4th of February, 1775, at the comedie Française.

† Les Moissonneurs, given to the Italian comedy.

‡ Eloge de Quesnay, par Mirabeau, Ephemerides du Citizien, 1775.

§ See his Letter to the Librarian of Milan in the Memoires by Lucas Montigney.

|| Ami des Hommes, t. 1. p. 141.

¶ This work, properly speaking, consists of but three volumes. It was published in 1756. Afterwards, other works of Mirabeau, strangers to the first, were comprised under the general title of Ami des Hommes.

announced in it several principles dear to the economists. He advocated absolute freedom of trade in grain as the only means of preventing famines, and he thus summed up his opinion, "What must be done to maintain abundance in a kingdom? Nothing."*

In the *Theory of Taxation*, the hardihood of which was very displeasing to Voltaire, he had denounced, with unequalled sharpness, the farmers of the revenue, their falsehoods, rapines, tyranny, accusing them of having invested the cities, exhausted the country, and impoverished a land, naturally fertile, to such a point, that there no longer remained in it, so to speak, but fortune hunters after the devastation of Peru.† Resuming the aphorism imprinted by the hand of Louis the Fifteenth; *indirect taxation; poor peasants; poor kingdom*, he rendered it sensible by saying, "Direct taxation upon the soil is the most useful to the soil, inasmuch as, neither more nor less, it supports all the others; but the difference is great between carrying it straight or aside."‡

What particularly employed the good sense of the marquis, whilst giving a handle to his immoderate fancy and biting hyperbole, was the question of the *corvées*. As a countryman, he knew better than any one how ruinous was the *corvée*, both for the peasant dragged three leagues from his residence and condemned to labor, which brought him neither wages nor food, and to the farmer who saw with pain his horses sleeping out beneath an intemperate sky, and also for the state, which, in exchange for roads that a colony of moles could destroy in a year,§ took from agriculture days of inestimable value.

Thus, even before Dupont de Nemours, Mercier de la Rivière, and the Abbé Baudeau, had produced the theory of Quesnay, it had found in the Marquis de Mirabeau, a defender, impetuous, incisive, without clearness, without method, but not without relief; and by him was opened that series of labors which the book of the celebrated Englishman, Adam Smith, was afterwards to crown with so much splendor by straightening out and completing them.

Such was then the movement of minds when a field of battle was suddenly opened to the rival doctrines.

"About the year 1750," says Voltaire,|| "the nation, tired of verses, tragedies, comedies, operas, romances, romantic histories, moral reflections still more romantic, and theological disputes about grace and convulsions, finally went to work to reasoning about corn. They forgot all about vines, in order to talk of wheat and rye. They wrote useful things about agriculture, which every one read, except the laborers. One might have supposed, on leaving the comic opera, that France had a prodigious quantity of corn for sale. Finally, the demand of the nation obtained from the government in 1764, permission to export it." It was immediately exported, but a sterile year having succeeded, complaints break out, the people are moved, the government is in trouble, and the ques-

* L'Ami des Hommes, t. 3. Foreign Commerce, p. 40.

† Theorie de l'Impot. Dialogue 5.

‡ Introduction au Mémoire sur les états provinciaux, p. 72.

§ L'Ami des Hommes, t. 1. p. 120.

|| Dictionnaire Philosophique, art. Corn.

tion of freedom of trade in grain agitates the world of intellect from one end of Europe to the other. This question was grave in itself, since it reached the subsistence of the people; but what added to the interest of the quarrel and gave it a true character of greatness was, that it brought into opposition the two schools which were disputing for the empire of society.

There was remarked among the crowd of economists at his times, although he did not partake of their principles, a Neapolitan of rare talent and full of thoughts, a man of wit which hid the statesman, the head of Machiavel on the body of a jester.* It was an abbé, but an abbé of the eighteenth century, that is a philosophical priest, smart in speech, of satirical habits, having handled all books, even the breviary, having gone to the bottom of every thing, and being enabled to bring the light of an original and strong intellect to bear on every question. He never failed, neither at the Wednesdays of Madame Geoffrin, nor the Thursdays of Baron Holbach, where his humor gushed out in flashes, when it did not shine in strokes of genius. Welcomed with a sort of dread in the circle of the economists, now he ran down on them with unforeseen objections and showed them some fine truth through the absurdity of his paradoxes; now mounted on a table like a juggler† and holding his wig in his hand which he made as it were the pivot of his pleasantries, he studied to excite the hilarity of his audience. But the time came in which their laughter was suddenly checked; for the buffoon had disappeared and Machiavel alone remained; and frequently those who came but to applaud a charming joker, went away marked by the talons of the eagle.

Such was the man whom the economists were to have as an adversary on the question of grains. They had chosen individual rights as the point of departure,—Galliani started from social rights. In order to assure large profits to the proprietor, by opening a vast market for him, they had commended the indifference of the state in the matter of grains, Galliani led them back vigorously to true principles, by opposing to them the reason of a state associated for the dearest interests of the people.

There was an inexpressible trouble among them, when in his dialogues on the *trade in corn*,‡ a paradoxical work, but admirable for its clearness, force, vivacity and depth, Galliani exclaimed,—“Who knows whether France has a superfluity of corn or not? Are you very sure that in offering corn to your enemy, you are not depriving your brother of it? How can this be known, since France being cut up by internal custom houses, the abundant provinces have never yet been able to succor freely those which are in distress? Before permitting exportation, would it not be prudent to provide for the free cultivation of grain through the interior of the kingdom? What sage economist would demand that the vase should be permitted to overflow, before knowing if it were full or not?”§

* Memoires de Marmontel, t. 2. p. 121.

† Memoires de Morallet, t. 1. p. 131.

‡ These dialogues are about the Edict of 1764.

§ Dialogues sur le Commerce des blés, p. 135, 138.

The theory of individual rights, which is absolute from its very nature, had led the economists to pay no regard to the diversities of climate and the differences of places and circumstances, in the solution of the problem; Galliani in his book, led his interlocutor through all Europe; he conducted him to Genoa, Naples, Rome, into Spain, England, Holland, and showing him here republics without territory and there an agricultural people without a marine, he taught him to consult places, times, circumstances, the geography of the question; "I am convinced, he said ironically to the the economists, that agriculture is every where the only source of wealth, even in Geneva, which has no tillable land but the pavement of its streets. You admire the prosperity of Holland, in which the trade in grain enjoys entire freedom, and you do not consider, inconsiderate copyists that you are, that in a sterile country, that corn, instead of being the revenue of the nation, is its first expense. Mounted upon their vessels which seek for corn from the extremities of the world, need the Hollanders fear famine? Their marine gives them the market of the world. You have then, in speaking of Holland, taken the expenditure for the receipt, and the receipt for the expenditure; a slight mistake indeed."*

But could not the economists reply on their side, that it is the part of a population of slaves only, to abandon the care of their subsistence to their chiefs. If the monk finds the doors of the refectory always open when the bell rings, it is because he is subjected to an austere discipline. If the soldier has no care about his support, it is because it is his part to obey. "I will support you and you shall serve me," such is the contract of slavery. The day on which a people is charged with its own subsistence, it is recognized as in its majority, it is enfranchised. This side of the question had not escaped the piercing glance of the Neapolitan publicist. He knew that the care of providing an abundance of and low price for grain was the principal occupation of power in all the countries of slavery, to Cairo, in the kingdom of Morocco, to Constantinople; he avowed that the policy of the Grand Vizier was summed up in these words, *we must provision Stamboul*; and he was not ignorant what Rome had become when its emperor said, "We give the multitude bread and shows." But the foresight which despots impose on themselves for their own interest, he did not think should be interdicted to the tutors of the people. Now had France reached that point, that the life of the multitude could be abandoned without danger to the caprices of egotism encouraged by independence? Was that people in a state of perfect health who were still seen bent beneath the double yoke of misery and ignorance? The convalescence of the sick man should be at least respected before making a transition from the close room to the open air. *Repent nothing*, said Galliani, and he denounced the famous edict of 1764 to be a too precipitate, a too adventurous concession to the spirit of individualism.

The attacks of Galliani bore, moreover, on the premature application of the principle and not on the principle itself. He divined the French

revolution in the horizon, and he went in his foreshadowings even beyond the liberalism of '89, when he wrote "I expect an entire code instead of a single law. The old policy, the administration of our fathers, the police, the oldest daughter of the policy, roll along entirely on reciprocal distrust of sovereign and people. If confidence takes its place the whole machine must be changed. *Novus rerum mihi nascitur ordo*. See a new order of things arise."

We have already said that the sect of the economists sprung from an union of two schools, of which one, under the special name of *Physiocracy*, inclined to agriculture, the other to commerce. Though burgherism in the eighteenth century was on the eve of being enabled to found its power upon the possession of a part of the soil, still the true lever of the ascending class was yet in moveable wealth, and the physiocrats would not probably have been able to sustain themselves, if they had not been lost in the ranks of the disciples of Gournay. Burgher France was essentially manufacturing, and in this capacity it strongly applauded the blows which Galliani had inflicted on purely agricultural societies in his book, for Galliani took advantage of the question of grain to abandon himself to vast views and to rise to a marvellous examination of the general laws of politics. He drew a very unforeseen and striking picture of agricultural nations in his *Dialogues*. Nothing equals the splendor he was here enabled to give to his views. He conceals his new ideas, as it were, beneath his cloak like dark lanterns; then suddenly exposing them, he presents them to the eyes of the reader and dazzles him. Who does not know the history of a gambler, his sharp and generous character, his mortal panics, his debts and his follies, his luxury mingled with indigence, his superstitions, his almost inevitable ruin? And yet this history, according to Galliani, is that of an exclusively agricultural people.* You see that laborer; he is throwing rouleaux of Louis upon a vast faro table; it is the earth; but it is the elements who keep the bank. The unknown is then the God whom an agricultural people always invoke. Balancing unceasingly between fear and hope, an agricultural people are continually exposed to see their calculations the sport of chance; they believe in witchcraft; they are *superstitious*. On the other side, hardened to labor, naturally bold, they do not dread combats; they are *warlike*. But war is the luxury of nations; it is by it that they ruin themselves when they have not manufactures enough to ward off the increase of expenses which war drags after it. They sell at low prices, they borrow at heavy interest. Among an agricultural people, the great willingly permit themselves to oppress the weak, and the day comes in which the multitude, in despair, calls the despotism of an individual to its assistance; the gambler is in prison; it is monarchy.

Thus, with a grain of corn which he had gathered by the way, Galliani wrote the history of France. And in fact, were not superstition, war, feudality, despotism, the history of the French nation, until manufacturers appeared at a signal from Colbert?

In the eighteenth century books were events; the work of Galliani produced an immense and universal impression. *Digitized by Google* Women read it and

* *Dialogues sur le commerce des blés*, from page 104 to 116.

carried it about in their work bags. Voltaire was in wonder.* Turgot passing the economists in review before him, did not find among them a writer capable of engaging in a contest with so formidable a tilter.† Having learned that the Abbé Morellet intended to refute Galliani, he used an honorable frankness in endeavoring to divert him from such an enterprise.‡ But though the counsels of Turgot were in general orders for his friends, Morellet had the imprudence to enter the lists. The *refutation* of Galliani by the Abbé Morellet, did not go beyond these limits, the absolute, permanent inviolability of the rights of an individual over his own things. The spirit of the book and of the school which inspired it, is found in the following passage; "A man merely makes use of his own property, his house, when he enters it to avoid injuries from the air, without opening his door to him who suffers without."§

The school of the economists prevailed, however; its circle extended daily, and the hour finally came in which it seized on power.

On the 10th of May, 1774, Louis the Sixteenth mounted the throne, and three months afterwards Voltaire wrote: "If Louis the Sixteenth goes on, there will hereafter be no talk of the age of Louis the Fourteenth. I esteem it too much to think that he can make all the changes with which we are menaced. He appears to me to have been born prudent and firm; he will then be a great and good king. Happy they who are only twenty years old like he, and who shall long taste the pleasures of his reign."||

This reign, whose initiation Voltaire thus saluted, commenced with an imprudence. Louis the Sixteenth, who had regular morals and a serious character, took as his first minister and guide an old courtier, in whom frivolity was but the varnish of systematic corruption. The ministry was soon completely remodelled beneath the eye and by the will of the Count de Maurepas. D'Aiguillon gave place to the Count de Vergennes; the Count de Mury had the port-folio of war; Maupeou was replaced by Hue de Miroménil; and Turgot, called first to the marine, was not long in succeeding the Abbé Terray in the finances. In the person of Turgot, the economists were at the helm, and they did not doubt that, thanks to the zeal and intrepidity of the new controller-general, their ideas were at last about to receive a brilliant application.

We have shown Turgot as a writer and administrator; what would the minister be?

Turgot had a handsome and severe figure. Brought up to the ecclesiastical state, from which philosophy removed him, he had carried into the world habits of reserve and modesty, which, ennobled by his pride, imposed on the frivolity of his equals. If, in order to transform, by calming it, a society ill at ease and disturbed, it was enough to possess vast instruction, Turgot would have been the person most worthy to watch

* Corres. de Voltaire, lettre 871, au comte d'Argental.

† Letter of Turgot to Mademoiselle Lespinasse, January 26, 1770.

‡ Mémoires de Morelly, t. 1. p. 167.

§ Refutation des dialogues sur le commerce des blés, chap. 4. p. 107, 108. . London, 1770.

|| Corresp. de Voltaire à Madame d'Épénai.

over the upheaving of his country; for he had been tempted by study into all directions, and had made a tour of every science.

But his mind wanted extent. He had not that powerful perception which measures the bearing of a principle at a glance. Hence arose his errors and his contradictions. He by whom the monopoly of corporations and the tyranny of the *corvées* fell, assuredly loved the people; and yet what did he propose in the place of the old oppression? The dignity of man in his isolation, his greatness in his egotism, war between interests under the name of competition, the abandonment of the poor under the name of freedom, the protection of the let-alone system for the strong, the devisory tutelage of chance for the weak. / Do not be astonished, if, in his intendantcy of Limousin, he proved a paternal solicitude for the people; if, after having proclaimed in theory the legitimacy of usury, he endeavored to combat its humiliating and cruel empire by crooked paths; if he decreed beneficence, after having preached in his books the religion of individual rights, the idol before whom so many human victims were to be immolated, . . . / Turgot was upright; how should not the publicist be many times refuted in him by the good man? Thus this contrast between the merit of his actions and the falseness of his views is the most sparkling trait of his life.

His goodness, moreover, was but that of the mind. His austere aversion for women was one of his weaknesses. He did not know that generous tenderness of the heart which, by warming the intellect, fructifies and enlightens it. He had neither that strong sensibility which resists the icy contact of business, nor that lively and regulated imagination which, by the attraction of the beautiful, conducts us to truth as surely as reason herself. He was impassioned but a little like sectaries, and not as a statesman should be. He placed the safety of a people in the mathematical triumph of a school. Let us say it without turning aside; there was nothing great about him, except his courage.

And yet there was no rival, at this period, who had a right to oppose him, except Necker.

Born at Geneva, he was as yet known but by an *Eulogy on Colbert*, which the Academy had crowned; but in this work, the writer allowed the minister to appear. It is certain that Necker had felt at an early period a passion for governing, and those who knew him thought him worthy of it. His wife, endowed with the most beneficent virtues, and a great character, had vowed to him a worship of mingled tenderness and veneration, and in their saloon, in which a child, who was Madame de Stael, was growing up, there reigned a sort of official gravity which announced ambitious plans.

If we are to believe Lavater, every thing revealed the statesman and the philosopher in Necker. His sober conversation and the calmness of his countenance disposed to sage thoughts. He was loved without familiarity; respected without embarrassment. When Lavater saw him, it was after one of those poignant defeats which fill vulgar souls with trouble. Necker was serious, but calm; he did the honors of his house to his expected visitor with a perfect freedom of mind and natural ease; only he spoke but little, like a man who makes his thoughts a refuge

against the storms of life. Happy, if he had not had against him a fortune too rapidly acquired, speculations too well conducted, and a suspected genius.

But his opulence might, perhaps, have been pardoned him; that which was not, was his disdain for the thinkers in vogue, and the independent superiority of his mind—for he had denounced the falsity of certain pompous words with which they put to sleep the injuries of the abused multitude. He had dared to say that the right of living and being happy is a lure for him who has not the power to do so; that the liberty of the indigent is one of the modes of slavery; that every pretension of the individual should have the general good as a rule and limit, and the state as a judge.

There was the true crime of Necker in the eyes of the economists. But whilst they were pursuing him with their wrath, and some of them with their calumnies; whilst though humbled from hating him, Turgot was seeking to hide from himself the wounds of his pride, by affecting a violent and false contempt for his rival, Necker was combatting in his adversaries, but their ideas, and opposing an invincible politeness to their injuries, he was overwhelming them by his moderation.

Moreover, in height of views and warmth of feeling, no one doubts Necker's superiority to Turgot.

But the opinions of this latter singularly lightened the duty of power. To destroy obstacles, and then to let alone, was, according to Turgot, to govern. If the courage of the man of action was necessary for that, it could dispense with the intrepidity of a thinker. Necker wished, on the other hand, that authority should be a great and laborious situation. To follow the agitated existence of the poor with a moved and vigilant heart through the social complications; to provide for the subsistence of all, and that each should find a place in the sacred domain of labor; to have strength for the weak, wisdom for the ignorant; to defend if not the happiness, at least the bread of the multitude against the brutal regime of competition, and the disorders of universal antagonism. . . . Necker thought that it was by such cares and solicitude that one merited the honor of governing an empire.

It was to demand from a minister, an ensemble of qualities which it was not given to Necker to unite. He must, then, when he reached the control of affairs, be crushed beneath the weight of his own conception.

Armed with an absolute principle, proposing to himself but to abate, and well-resolved to repose the consequences on the clear-sightedness of private interest, Turgot had only to go straight forward. It was not so with Necker, who was desirous of foreseeing and regulating every thing. Once mounted on the top, he felt his strength and will inferior to his ideal; he feared to be insufficient; he hesitated between the shame of being useless or indifferent, and the fear of daring too much, becoming more undecided and troubled the farther he looked; for indecision is the torment of clear-sightedness.

Turgot then rose above his writings, Necker fell below his.

We shall, however, see that the popularity of Necker was immense; and nothing was wanting to his rapid triumph, neither the acclamations

of the crowd, nor the enthusiasm of women, nor that crowd of envious persons which every eminent man draws after him, furious, powerless, and condemned to increase by its clamors the noise which glory makes in passing.

Turgot had scarcely reached the post of controller general, when he thought of installing the doctrine of the economists in it; and on the 13th of September, 1774, a decree of the council orders the free circulation of grain throughout the kingdom. The whole school was transported with joy. Necker then took up his pen, and from a subject which Galliani seemed to have exhausted, he produced a powerful book, in which a grave elocution and a restrained emotion reigned throughout, and certain pages of which might have been equally claimed by a statesman and a poet. Seeking in the question of grain only an opportunity of combatting, for the advantage of the people, the system of individualism, and remounting to the constitutive principles of societies, Necker submitted them to an examination as lofty as it was bold.

He, who in the beginning, set some stakes around a piece of land and sowed seeds in it, would he have obtained by this sole title the exclusive privilege of the land for himself and his descendants to the end of time? "No, no, replied Necker, so great an advantage could not have been derived from so small an act of merit."* The right of property then was only based, in the eyes of Necker, on its social utility; and from those who dared to give any other foundation for their right, he asked, "Is your title to possession written in heaven? Have you brought your land from a neighboring planet? What strength have you, you do not acquire from society."† Necker defined liberty with no less justice. He was not surprised that the word *liberty* alone should have an enchantment for men raised in obedience, and struck with the long spectacle of their servitude, and that that of *prohibition* should resound to the depths of their soul like the rattling of a chain not yet broken; but it had not escaped him that in the midst of an universal strife, and when the arms are unequal, liberty is simply the hypocrisy of oppression. Would you permit a robust man to ameliorate his condition in the name of liberty, at the expense of a feeble one? Now said Necker, "the strong man in society is the proprietor, the weak one is the man without property."‡

The better to show to what abuses the idea of *right* can conduct, when not interpreted with the heart, he had resource to a striking hypothesis.§ He supposed some were finding means to appropriate to themselves the air, as others had done the soil; then he represented them as imagining tubes, inventing air-pumps, which permitted them to rarefy the air here, and condense it there; would those few men be permitted to dispose arbitrarily of the respiration of mankind?

Thus without attacking radically the right of property, and precisely because liberty was dear to him, Necker assigned to them the public good for a bound. Applying these principles to the question of grains, he drew from them consequences diametrically opposed to the system of

* Sur la législation et le commerce des grains, part 1. chap. 26, p. 173, 1776.

† Ibid. p. 176.

‡ Ibid. p. 184.

§ Ibid, part 1, chap. 5, p. 225.

the economists. To the isolated individual saying, "I wish to do as I please," he opposes society saying, "I do not wish a man to do what hurts me."* You affirm that your corn is your own. "Yes, replied society, but that it may be of service to all."

Now could the constant, absolute liberty of exporting grain, of selling it or not, of using or abusing it, become in certain cases mortal to the people? Necker was astonished they should put the question. In grain, the superfluity of the proprietor is the life of the laborer. To abandon the disposal of so precious a superfluity to the cupidity of personal interest, was, according to Necker, to give to some the right of life and death over others.

And he took into the account not only the most imperious of the wants of the multitude, but its imagination and alarms. Let one figure to himself an hundred thousand men in an enclosed space; an hundred thousand loaves of bread are necessary for their daily subsistence, and these loaves some merchants bring them every day. So long as the amount to be furnished is done so exactly, the price does not change; but one day two loaves fail, only two loaves, the void which deprives two persons of their subsistence, the fear of being one of these unfortunates excites an ardor of purchasing, incalculable in its effects; and where shall the pretensions of the merchants then stop?

The free export of grain did not appear admissible to Necker, but under the empire of a treaty of commerce, which should have subjected foreigners to an exact reciprocity; but that France should open its granaries to nations who closed theirs to her, and that at the will, according to the fancy or the calculations of a small number of private individuals, such a system concealed a criminal, a rash disdain for the interests and the life of the people.

"You wish to protect agriculture," said Necker to the economists. "Here are lands which have been left uncultivated, and you wish them to be cultivated? Well, advances wisely made to the owners of these lands, a manufactory established in the neighborhood, a temporary freedom from taxation, a canal dug, a river rendered more navigable, a general fall in the interest of money produced by a good administration,—behold the true means to excite cultivation, and the only ones which are worthy of a statesman. But to tie the encouragement of agriculture to the faculty granted to the owners of grain of enriching themselves by sudden advances which shall plunge thousands of families into distress and despair, is a game full of cruelty and danger."

Under the pretext that wages always ended by proportioning themselves to the price of commodities of the first necessity, the physiocrats maintained that the high price of provisions was not contrary to the interests of the people. Necker refuted this dangerous sophism with emotion. It is to-day that bread becomes dearer, and it is only in one, two or three months, that my wages will be increased. In the interval, must I die? Necker exclaimed,

"Ask that man who drives a plough; ask that horde of reapers, to

whom the smallest possible recompense in money is given, if they desire dear food; they would be very much astonished, if they knew how to read, at perceiving that it is clamored for in their name. It is a great abuse to use compassion for the people to strengthen the prerogatives of the proprietors; it is almost to imitate those terrible animals, which, on the banks of the rivers of Asia, assume the voices of children in order to devour men."*

Necker unveiled with sagacity the inconveniences of internal freedom of trade in grain,† without hiding the advantages. Thus he was far from reaching the suppression of this liberty as a conclusion; he confined himself to pointing out rules which might hinder regard for the poor from being transformed into tyranny. The people only engage the attention of society by their misfortunes, and of all that immense space called the future, they perceive only to-morrow; Necker concluded from that, that to assure the to-morrow of the people, was the most sacred and pressing duty of the state. "What! that the representatives of public order should wish me to extinguish a fire, to die in a battle, and yet not look after my subsistence! Should they not establish laws which could guarantee it? Should they not moderate the possible abuse of wealth towards poverty, of strength towards weakness?"‡

The book ended with these profound words:§

"It might be said, that a few men, after having divided the earth among them, made laws of union and guarantee against the multitude, as they would have erected palisades in the woods against wild beasts. Would any one, however, dare to say, that after having established the laws of property, justice and liberty, there was nothing yet to do for the most numerous class of the citizens? "What do your laws of property," these might say, "concern us? we own nothing; your laws of justice? we have nothing to defend; your laws of liberty? if we do not labor to-morrow we shall die."||

In the month of April, (1775,) Necker solicited permission to print his book, and went to the controller general. The interview between these two men was cold and solemn. The Abbé Morellet was present;¶ he was a witness to the haughtiness of the banker, and the scorn of the minister. Necker held his manuscript in his hand and offered not to publish it, if it should be thought to be at all of a nature to disturb the public order. Turgot replied with disdainful indifference that he saw no incon-

* Sur la législation et le commerce des grains, part 1. chap. 26. p. 180.

† Would it be believed that the economists have accused Necker of bad faith for having treated in his book, both of internal circulation and exportation, when the Edict of Turgot had reference to the former? As if it were not the right and duty of a writer, when he treats a question of this nature, to regard it in all its aspects. The reproach here is still the more unjust, since if exportation was not in the edict of Turgot, (of which Necker, moreover, does not speak,) it was, as is known to all, in the doctrines, writings and plans of the school.

‡ Sur la législation et le commerce des grains.

§ *Mémoires de Pierre Devoux and Jean Reynaud have resumed them in the New Encyclopædia, a work which expresses the modern sentiment with so much elevation.*

|| Sur la législation et le commerce des grains, p. 3. chap. 12. p. 406.

¶ *Mémoires de Morellet, t. 1. chap. 11. p. 234.*

venience in the emission of such documents, that he did not fear them. They parted enemies.

The book of Necker appeared, and admiration as well as hatred consecrated its success. Diderot congratulated him on it, as a book of genius.* many of those whose ideas and interests it attacked, reviled it;† but the work was dedicated to misfortune; the women, who are always generous, applauded it; and then commenced among those of them whose wit and beauty were most vaunted, that enthusiasm for the writer, which was to survive the fortune of the minister.‡

Turgot, however, displayed in power an impatience of reforms and an intrepidity which were soon to bring him into perils. Notwithstanding his resistance, fortified by the credit of Maupepas, those parliaments that Maupeou appeared to have crushed were recalled in November, 1774; and their opposition to his plans was announced by distant attacks. He had also the priests against him, who did not pardon his having contributed to the encyclopedia; certain financiers whose scandalous importance he had nobly threatened, and the courtiers whom his philosophical pride put to the blush. They leagued to destroy him, and in some churches, seditious language fell from the pulpit. The harvest of 1774 had been bad; the people were suffering; souls were open to that vague restlessness which precedes revolutions, . . . threatening rumors were suddenly spread. The multitude listened; a word which is never heard without causing a start, the word *famine* had been pronounced.

It was the end of April. Troubles had broken out at Dijon, where the angry people had invaded the residence of the monopolizers, destroyed one of their mills, and cast its broken furniture out of the windows. To heighten it, a brutal and ferocious remark had been made by the commandant of the city, one of those remarks on which revolutions furnish a commentary; "My friends, the grass is beginning to grow; go to pasture."§

The agitation was approaching Paris nearer and nearer. A troop of men armed with clubs first went through the markets of Pontoise, Poissy and Saint-Germain, to excite the people in them, to destroy the ovens, to pillage the meal, and then showed themselves tumultuously at Versailles on the 2d of May, 1775, announcing that they were going to Paris the next day. Alarm penetrates the chateau, the windows are closed, and Louis the Sixteenth surprised by clamors of which he was yet ignorant, hastens to have an ordinance posted up at Versailles which fixed the price of bread at two sous the pound. The emeute was thus appeased,|| and the young king wrote with his own hand, letters upon letters to Turgot, who was then in Paris, to inform him of the measures

* Corres. de Diderot, t. 12. des œuvres, p. 440.

† Bachaumont, *Memoires Secrets*, t. 8. p. 34.

‡ Senac de Meilhan, after having proved this enthusiasm of the women for Necker, adds: "The Duchess of Lauzun, the mildest and most timid of women, was seen to attack in a public garden, an unknown man, whom she heard speak ill of Necker, and so far depart from her character, as to speak injuriously to him." Du gouvernement, des mœurs, et des conditions en France avant la Revolution, p. 187.

§ Extract of a letter from Dijon, of the 20th April, 1775, reported in the papers of the day.

|| Nougaret *Régne de Louis Seize*, t. 5. p. 47.

which had been taken ; the free arrival of meal by the Seine and the Marne was provided for ; the tumult was destroyed.*

But Turgot saw but one thing in this news ; taxation of bread, that is the violation of the liberty of the bakers. He hastens to Versailles, and represents to Louis the Sixteenth, that they should not allow principles to recoil, that compassion is here a fault, and at the same time obtains an order from the king for the bakers not to sell bread, but at the current price.†

At Paris every thing was prepared to meet the expected emeute ; and the controller general promised that this time authority would not bend. The musketeers, the Swiss guard, the French guard, the watch, all the troops of the king's household were on foot, and were to guard the markets under the orders of the Marshal de Biron. But on the 3d of May the seditious entered Paris, early in the morning, by different gates at the same time, and whilst the marshal was losing time in having the flags blest—for it was the day consecrated to this ceremony—the shops of the bakers were pillaged, and distribution of bread was made to the people by the revolted. They gave loaves to all they met, and they cast them to the masons on their scaffolds. The disorder lasted for two hours ; it had ceased when the marshal came finally to occupy the posts. The bourgeois then sallied out, curious to see the emeute, but they only found rebels reassured by the countenances of the troops, and exchanging friendly salutations with the guards, an avant courier of what was to happen at the beginning of the revolution.‡

They were however disturbed by the hidden origin of those troubles. Placards full of threats had been posted up in the gardens of the Thuilleries. It was said that unknown men on horseback had carried anonymous notes to many farmers ; “ Do not sell your grain, they said, it will become dearer.”§ They spoke of bandits arrested with half louis d'ors in their pockets,|| of barns burned, of meal thrown into the streams, of peasants in the pay of some factious curates.¶ Who knows if the revolt did not spring from a vast plot formed by agitators of high rank ? These suppositions founded on a striking concourse of circumstances, were moreover credited by the economists, careful of their doctrine, engaged in the chances of a popular commotion. They also accused the book of Necker, a book written, they said, to address the passions of the multitude, and in which rebellion sought for its passport.**

Entirely opposed to this was the language of the adversaries of the

* Letters from Louis the Sixteenth to Turgot in the English Observer, letter 1. p. 411. Edit. of 1777.

† Extracted from a letter from Versailles, of the 2d of May, quoted in a note in the *Relation Historique de l'Emute arrivèe la 3 Mai, 1775*, p. 259. It is printed at the end of the *Memoirs of the Abbé Terray*.

‡ *Relation historique*, p. 258.

§ *Ibid.* p. 278.

|| Soulavie maintains a fact very unlike the truth, that among the victims of this emeute, was a rebel who was a knight of the Holy Ghost. *Mémoire du regne de Louis Seize*, t. 2. p. 293.

¶ *Instruction aux curés*.

** We have seen how unjust this reproach was, according to the relation of the Abbé Morellet, himself a zealous economist. The book of Necker appeared on the day of the emeute. It did not provoke it then, even supposing that such works were read at that period by the multitude. See also on this subject, *Histoire du regne de Louis Seize* by Droz, t. 1. p. 165.

economical school. Was it necessary to assign mysterious causes for that which had manifest causes in misery, the commencement of a famine, the apprehensions sown by the too famous theory of the *nett product*, and the decrees of the council in which they had dared to affirm that bread ought to be dear? * Because acts of blind fury had been committed, were they to assume from facts of venal anger, that the resentments of certain magistrates, nobles and priests had made an alliance with disorder? They were the accidents of the revolt, not its principle.

In the midst of these contrary clamors, Turgot was ardent and irritated. He did not doubt that the ringleaders had wished to decry the system of the economists, to render it odious or ridiculous by inducing these to believe that free trade would bring with it high price in grain, and those that it would set every thing on fire. He displayed then an unexpected exuberance of energy, activity and vigor, well determined to inaugurate the reign of free trade by a stroke of state policy. He gave sentinels to the bakers; he complained of the mildness of Marshal Biron; he exacted the degradation of the lieutenant of police, Lenoir, who par-took of the ideas of Necker on the trade in grain; he went to the hotel of M. d'Aligre to warn him that parliament had better not mix itself up with the suppression of the emeute; he lanced letters de cachet, and threw into the Bastille, among others, Saurin and Doumerc, proposed under the ministry of Terray, as the excise officers of corn.† The prisons were filled with insurgents or suspected persons, who were remarked during the day and arrested during the night.

The parliament on its side being excited against the economists, and especially against Turgot, made a decree on the 4th of May against riotous assemblages, and ordered that the king should be very humbly supplicated to lower the price of bread to *a rate proportioned to the wants of the people*.‡ Nothing could be more sensible to Turgot attacked directly in his system, and he did not hesitate to employ the dictatorship of the court against his adversaries. The decree of the parliament had scarcely left the printers, when the minister sent musketeers to prevent the sale and break up the plates.§ The sheets already posted up, were torn down by the authority of Marshal Biron, as if Paris had been in a state of siege, and they affected to cover the decree of the sovereign court, by one in the king's name, without date or signature, and which prohibited, under penalty of death, the exaction of bread below the current price. During this time, Malesherbes, whom the economists called the *pontiff*, drew up at the request of Turgot, his friend, a declaration which took from parliament all cognizance of every thing having reference to corn. A letter de cachet enjoined on the magistrates to go in black robes to Versailles on the next day, the 5th of May, to hold a bed of justice.

Turgot wished to strike a great blow. He demanded to be appointed minister of war for some days. He has no sooner the signature of the

* Bachaumont, *Mémoires Secrets*, t. 8. p. 54.

† They were recognized as perfectly innocent, even during the ministry of Turgot. *Bastille dévoilée*, No. 4. p. 45, 46.

‡ Decree of May 4th, 1775.

§ *Relation historique*, p. 266.

king in blank, than he hastens, on the very night, to the head-quarters of the light-horse, awakes the post in the king's name, and, presenting himself to the soldiers in a black dress and with dishevelled hair, gives them an order to move; for the emeute was to break out anew at Pontoise.*

On the 5th of May, the parliament appeared at Versailles at the appointed hour. But in the interval, the Count de Maurepas, who was pleased to show himself at the opera on the night of the pillage, and whose frivolity all this uproar amused, persuaded Louis the Sixteenth to confine himself to taking the punishment of the culprits from parliament and hand them over to prevotal justice without extending the effects of the declaration farther. On this new advice, the despatches of the evening having to be modified, they kept the parliament waiting, by serving up to it a great dinner,† a singular contrast with the famine of which they talked so much, and at five o'clock the bed of justice commenced. Louis the Sixteenth announced the resolution of departing temporarily from the usual order, and of giving an extraordinary extension to the prevotal jurisdiction. He dismissed them with these words, *I prohibit you from making any remonstrances.*

The magistrates then retired, dispossessed of the right of inflicting justice in a capital case, but at the bottom, charmed at not having to incur the unpopularity which was about to attach to the chastisement of the culprits; for the menacing attitude of power did not appear to be sufficiently justified by the greatness of the danger; and whilst Turgot was forming a vast plan for the campaign; whilst he was setting in motion gendarmes, Swiss guards, French guards, and even the invalids; whilst he was sending black musqueteers to the banks of the Marne, and grey musketeers to the lower Seine, the Parisians, seeing the peace restored, were lampooning at once the controller general, Marshal Biron and his army. The women already wore *bonnets à la revolte*, and the jesters asked if Marshal Biron drew twenty-four thousand livres a month for levelling the cannon of the arsenal at the swallows of the Seine, strange laughter, which left the people serious and attentive; the last outbreaks of the old French gaiety, at the moment of a crisis which was no longer to permit to France but enthusiasm or terror.

They sought for a plot; they could not discover one. The true plot was in fact the instinctive protest of poverty against liberty, for leaving things at random; the true plot in this solemn question of the subsistence of all, was the agitation of the masses, tormented by the care of living and saying with Necker, to the innovators, who thought to free them by the *let-alone system*: "What do your laws of property concern us? We own nothing; your laws of justice? We have nothing to defend; your laws of liberty? Unless we labor to-morrow we shall die."

Two gallows, eighteen feet high, were erected in the Place de Grève, on the 11th of May, and offered the sight of a double punishment to the multitude who had become silent. We have talked about the revolution with an old man who had passed entirely through it, and we seem still to see him moved to tears when commencing the dark story of his

* Nougaret, *Règne de Louis Seize*, t. 5. p. 101.

† Ibid. t. 5. p. 103.

souvenirs with this execution. "The punishment of those two men made," he said to us, "a painful impression." They expiated the impulse of popular alarms, and their last words addressed to the people were, that they were dying in their cause.*

Turgot had not exhibited either the attitude or the serenity of a statesman in this crisis,† but his bursts of passion were at least those of a strong conviction. And how easily are they forgotten, when we recapitulate the many services which marked or rather immortalized the administration of Turgot. To cut short the shameful profits of the *croupiers*, to annihilate a multitude of local rights and private monopolies, which tended to render the subsistence of the people dearer; to free the peasant from the obligation of putting his wagons and horses at the service of the military convoys when he was required to do so; to take from the Hotel Dieu, amidst the applause of all Paris, the privilege of selling food exclusively during Lent; to improve the internal navigation; to render roads and means of transportation more perfect; to destroy the feudal barriers which opposed the circulation of wines in the interior of the kingdom; to cause the establishment of a bank of discount, to lower the price of capital; to reduce the old deficit from twenty-three to fifteen millions, and that by economy alone; to restore the credit by the force of loyalty . . . was to do more and better in twenty months than the most powerful and boldest ministers had done in the course of a long career.‡

But sustained by Malesherbes whom he had called into the council, Turgot determined to strike other decisive blows at the old social order. A pamphlet, written under his inspiration, was put forth among those minds then so ardent for novelty. Its end? the abolition of the *corvées*; its name? it had none; its author? Voltaire. A shout of grief and alarm arose immediately from the camp of the privileged; the prince of Conti is indignant, d'Epréménil breaks out, and the parliament suppresses the book. This was to defy Turgot; he accepted the challenge, and on the 3d of February, 1776, parliament received a communication of the edict which abolished the *corvées*. The minister replaced it by a tax upon the property, subject to the *vingtièmes*, thus saving the property of the church, but striking that of the nobles. They urged remonstrances. "The people of France are *taillable* and *corveable* at will, exclaimed the magistrates; it is a part of the constitution that the king cannot change." On his side, the prince of Conti, the organ of the proud contempt of the nobility, dared to maintain that it was not permitted to substitute any tax whatever for the *corvée*, because it would be to efface from the forehead of the crowd the original marks of its servitude.§ The disgrace of such resistance was dishonored by such motives. Turgot redoubled his firmness. He replied victoriously, in the council, to the objections of Miro-ménil, tamed the ill will of Maurepas, carried on Louis the Sixteenth,

* Relation Historique, p. 280.

† M. Blanqui himself admits it in his *Histoire de l'Economie Politique*.

‡ The acts of the ministry of Turgot are found in detail in the 2d volume of his words, (Edit. Guillaumin,) from page 165 to page 685. We can only refer the reader to them. See also *Memoirs of the Life and Works of Turgot* by Dupont de Nemours. Philad. 1782.

§ L'Observateur Anglais, t. 3. p. 168.

and in a bed of justice held on the 12th of March, 1776, parliament was compelled to register an edict, by which jurandes and corvées were at the same time abolished for ever.

Two months afterwards enveloped in a furious league, darkly attacked by his own colleagues, deprived of the assistance of Malesherbes, who had retired from fatigue, betrayed by Maurepas, abandoned by Louis the Sixteenth, Turgot fell from power; and they set themselves to work to build up again the edifice he had thrown down. . . But the revolution was there. The principle which had prevailed in philosophy and politics was to gain, by the destruction of the jurandes, a victory, from which it was never more to recede. It was necessary for competition to succeed an oppressive association.

It is related that on the day on which the fall of the corporations was determined upon, there were singular and strong transports in Paris. Workmen left their masters in crowds. They were seen traversing the city, lost in joy. Some rode about triumphantly in carriages, whilst spread through festive halls, the greater part celebrated the promised emancipation by gay repasts, and repeated in chorus that word so dear and so sweet, liberty. They did not know that there was a phase to traverse before exhausting all the forms of servitude; that it would reappear, less hard, it is true, but still too hard after half a century of risings and funerals; that beneath another name and another mask, and for the benefit of another kind of force, competition would arise from the bosom of modern societies, like an image of the egotism of uncivilized people; that the common herd, poor and hungry, would write on the standard of civil wars, a device impossible ever to forget, and that in the eyes of many thousands of men dreading to-morrow, *let-alone* would mean *let-die*.

Thus, by the effect of a law which appears to be that of all revolutions, society did not divorce itself from a bad principle, but to surrender itself without foresight, and reserve to an entirely opposite principle. On the eve of '89, France was ready to seek guarantees,

Against intolerance, in skepticism;

Against absolute power, in constitutional anarchy;

Against monopoly, in isolation.

The doctrine of individualism was moreover the only one which had been sufficiently and completely elaborated. But as has been seen, the cause of fraternity had not wanted defenders among philosophers and publicists. It was on this account that the revolution consisted of two acts, the last of which was a violent, terrible, but sublime and prodigious protest. Do not be astonished, if, on the table on which were drawn up decrees which made France start, and braved Europe, by exciting it, you are shown one of those writings which a certain sad dreamer had meditated beneath the peaceful avenues of his retreat. For that which will characterize throughout those terrible struggles we have to describe, will be the fanaticism of ideas. The irritated multitude will pass before us, led by thinkers of impassive countenances, and by studious tribunes; the boldest representatives of a period agitated by so much rage, will appear to us in the midst of a tumultuous crowd, like the heroes of abstraction; and such will be their energy drawn solely from the enthusiasm of the

brain, that it will surpass all that violent inspirations, the intoxication of glory, hatred, envy, the furies of the spirit of conquest, the transports of love ever inspired.

Thus—and it was what the jealousy of Napoleon never pardoned them—it will be granted to these men, unskilful in the management of a horse and a sword, these *ideologists*, to draw force in their train with a sovereign hand, to set victory in motion, and to elevate and maintain a dictatorship on heights which would have troubled the genius of a Cæsar.

Yes, from the worship by turns vehement and concentrated of a principle, from the intellect exalted to become the most stormy of passions, the originality of the French Revolution shines out. We must then seek of what labors, continued from age to age, it was the end, and as it were the explosion.

But what! Even when the sovereignty of a pure idea is debated is it blood, always blood? What is then that law which gives some great disaster as a condition of every great progress? Like a plough, revolutions only render the earth fruitful, by tearing it up; why? From whence is it that the duration is but the destruction which is prolonged and renewed? From whence comes this power of death to make life germinate? When in a society which is crumbling to pieces, thousands of individuals perish, crushed beneath the ruins, what matters it we say? the species walks on. But is it just that whole races should be tormented and annihilated, that at some later day, in indeterminate time, different races should enjoy the labors accomplished and evils suffered? Is not this immense and arbitrary immolation of beings of yesterday for those of to-day, and of those of to-day for those of to-morrow of a nature to stir conscience in its most profound depths? And to the unfortunate who fall murdered before the altar of progress, can progress appear to be any thing but a sinister idol, an execrable and false divinity?

These would be, we may believe, terrible questions, if there were not two beliefs to solve them; the solidarity of races, and the immortality of the human kind. For when we admit that every thing transforms itself, and that nothing is destroyed; when we believe in the impotence of death; when we are persuaded that successive generations are but varied modes of the same universal life, which continues itself in self-amelioration; when in fine we adopt that admirable definition which escaped from the genius of Pascal, "Mankind is a man who lives always and learns unceasingly," then the sight of so many accumulated catastrophes loses what it had that was overwhelming to conscience; we no longer doubt the wisdom of general laws, of eternal justice; and without growing pale, without flinching, we follow the periods of that long and dolorous gestation of truth, called History.

The good alone is absolute; it alone is necessary. The evil in the world is an immense accident. And it is on that account that its part is, to be unceasingly conquered. Whilst however the victories of good are definite, the defeats of evil are irrevocable; the press will remain; but they will not restore torture, nor rekindle the funeral pyres of the inquisitions. What do I say? It becomes evident from the march of things, and the common tendency of grave minds, that progress will not be ac-

X accomplished hereafter on violent conditions. Already, in the relations of people with people, industry has shown, that to propagate ideas, we must get rid of war; and in civil relations, reason proves more and more, that order can do without the executioner. Religions have ceased to make martyrs; it is necessary that politics should in its turn cease to make victims.

Here terminates the recital of the adventures of thought, so far as they concern the French Revolution. Now the scene is about to change; ideas will become actions; books will once more become combats, philosophers gladiators.

PART SECOND.

THE
TWO REVOLUTIONS.

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THE TWO REVOLUTIONS.

THE sight of two revolutions is about to open. The one bearing the impress of Voltaire will be easily victorious, and will resemble a festival almost as much as a combat; the other sprung from Jean-Jacques will possess only a funereal majesty, and will end with a catastrophe.

This tragical contrast appears to have been presaged by the destinies, so different, of Voltaire and Jean-Jacques.

What a day was that in which a shout was suddenly raised in Paris, become revolutionary, already murmuring and ready to pass from theory to action, "Voltaire is here." The powers of the day were stupified; the priests were troubled; the people agitated, and poets, artists, the philosophers, the princes of speech and thought hastened emulously to bend before the unexpected guest; some however refused, and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre replied to Rousseau, who asked him, "I should be too much embarrassed in approaching a man who has a people for clients and kings for flatterers."* But the number of those whom haughtiness restrained was small: the current of the age sat towards Voltaire, for the admiration of men is rarely disinterested; what their enthusiasm willingly salutes in a chosen mortal is, not so much the beauty, as the suitableness of his genius; and Voltaire was precisely the great man whom society then needed.

It is well known that Franklin having presented his son to him to be blessed, he extended his hand over the head of the child and said: "God and liberty." Admirable words if every thing that was incomplete was not deceptive, and as if liberty could exist where equality and fraternity are not. But the true, liberating formula was not yet found, and seduced by two words which their former oppression caused them to love, the people abandoned themselves without distrust to their magic sweetness. The crowd pressed beneath the windows of Voltaire, happy to possess him and impatient to applaud him. The prodigies of his unequalled life were related, the changes he had introduced into the world counted; Rome astonished at such an enemy, catholicism half conquered, division introduced among the old powers, Calas reinstated, manners softened, parliaments reduced to a disavowal of their fanaticism,

* Bernardin de Saint Pierre, t. 11. de ses Œuvres.

and as the highest consequence of the right of control, the dignity of the human mind proclaimed as inviolable as God.

There were those whom the arrival of the philosopher alarmed. But the priests in vain lanced their anathema in their temples, which were about to become deserts, and from the foot of their insulted altars; Voltaire, eighty-four years old, sick, exhausted, disconcerted their anger and triumphed. The rumor was spread however, that attacked by a sickness which was pronounced fatal, he had called in a confessor and had asked pardon from the church.* But this man, whose life had been one long sarcasm, was pleased to be regarded as mocker even in his death struggle. The church itself, whom his submission, avenged dared not believe in his repentance, so that an act of weakness coming from him had the appearance of an offence. He rallied, moreover, as if to lose nothing of the happy dream in which he was about to expire. When he went to see the representation of his last tragedy, there was an unexampled exultation in Paris. Thousands of men filled the route by which he must pass. His carriage is seen afar, and all at once rush towards it with a shout. He descended supported by faithful arms. A superb furred robe of sable, the gift of an empress, a wig with grizzly curls, long ruffles of lace, such was the costume in which he presented himself to the astonished and delighted Parisians.† His eyes shone with a splendor that banished fatigue from his features and pallor from his face; he enjoyed his glory passionately; he was moved, and the solemnity of the moment had for a time banished the accustomed smile from his sneering lip. In the theatre, the house rose as he entered. The women standing up in their boxes, held out their hands towards the poet, as a being they invoked. Many shed tears of delight, some kneeled. He himself, weak, with an altered figure, leant upon the crowd, thanking it by gestures and ready to succumb beneath the intoxication of his heart. They crowned his bust in his presence, in order that he might assist whilst living at the fêtes of his immortality. . . . Two months afterwards he was no more.‡

It has been written that the Emperor Julian, mortally wounded in battle, before having struck the last blows which hatred had prepared for christianity, collected in his hand some blood which flowed from his wound and threw it towards heaven exclaiming, "Galilean, thou hast conquered." Voltaire was not condemned to such imprecations; he expired in the pomp and tumult of a triumph.

During this time Jean-Jacques Rousseau was consuming the remains of his life in isolation and grief. Friends of a patient goodness were necessary to that mind which knew not repose, to that rent soul, and Rousseau had never had but protectors or judges. Most of them had praised his genius, only to place themselves in a position not to sympa-

* Condorcet, *Vie de Voltaire*, t. 1. des Œuvres de Voltaire, Edit. Benchot, p. 294. Correspondance de Grimm, t. 10. p. 22. Edit. Furne. Paillet de Marcy, *Hist. de via et des Œuvres de Voltaire*, p. 360.

† Corres. de Grimm, t. 10. p. 6.

‡ See concerning this triumph, in addition to the above cited works, la *Histoire de Voltaire*, by Duvernet.

thize with his misfortunes; they had thought themselves sufficiently just in admiring him, who required to be loved. He became sad to madness. . . . Why? Because the sight of things did not respond to the sublimity of his desires, nor to the heroism of his conceptions; because knowing men to be good, he had been unable to resign himself to finding them wicked; because an apostle of the doctrine of fraternity, he was assisting at the movement of a dissolution behind which he saw the abyss; because, finally, possessing the treasure of tenderness and not finding in any one a power of loving equal to his own, he had been compelled to close his heart. From thence arose his faults, expiated by his misfortunes, and what misfortunes! The victim of an imaginary plot, surrounded by enemies, the phantoms of his sick imagination, he endeavored in vain to escape from himself, either by wandering far from the beaten paths, he asked from nature a forgetfulness of mankind, or motionless, with his glance fixed on space, he sought for himself a refuge in the world of his thoughts. Towards the close, he was subject to wandering fits, which presented themselves at his home by signs well known by his rare visitors. Sometimes, for example, they surprised him turned around on his chair, with his arm passed over the back, and swinging there like a pendulum.* Then a cloud came over his face; his habitual melancholy became changed to despair, and his disordered sentiments were exhibited in a conversation full of bitter madness.

He had always been poor, and had never complained, so long as he was enabled to bear his misery proudly and to guarantee himself by labor from the yoke of obligations. But the hour was coming in which his activity yielding to old age, he saw his resources daily diminishing; his wife lost her health; he fell sick in his turn, and from that moment he counted indigence in the number of his misfortunes.

In dread of his to-morrow, he wrote these touching lines on a paper which bears date, February, 1777:—

"My wife has been long sick. . . . Reduced to live absolutely alone and yet not being in a condition to do without the services of another, there remains in our infirmities and desolation, only one way of sustaining our old days; it is to find some asylum in which we can subsist at our own expense, but exempt from labor which surpasses our strength, and from details and cares of which we are no longer capable. Besides, no matter how they treat me, whether they keep me in an actual enclosure or in apparent freedom, in a hospital or a desert, with mild or harsh people, with false or true (if there are still any of the latter), I consent to every thing, provided they bestow on my wife the cares her situation requires, and that they give me a roof, the most simple clothing and the plainest food to the end of my days, so that I shall not be compelled hereafter to take part in any thing."†

It was under these cruel circumstances that M. Stanislas de Girardin

* De Jean-Jacques Rousseau par Corancez, p. 41. Only forty or fifty copies of this extremely curious little work were struck off. The one we saw was loaned to us by Madame Cavaignac, the daughter of Corancez.

† A letter cited in the work of Corancez, p. 56.

besought Rousseau to accept an asylum. A vigilant hospitality awaited the author of *Emile* at a short distance from Paris, in the midst of a smiling country, where several situations might recall to him the happy shores of Vevay and the rocks of Meillerie. A small pavilion was offered him near the chateau of Ermenonville, where, in the midst of an old orchard, and in places arrayed in accordance with the description of the elyseum of Clarens, a dwelling was prepared for him filled with the images of the *New Heloise*.* The poor old man could not resist the temptation of seeing the trees and breathing the air of the hills; he accepted it and went to it. But sadness had taken too strong possession of him for him to rid himself of his habitual suffering. With his lot cast in an age in which he felt himself a stranger, he was, like all precursors, to be the martyr to his own glory. Thus nothing could soothe his pains and save him from the discouragement of lying. Neither the cares of a generous family, nor a free sojourn in the woods, so dear to his savage restlessness, nor his affection for the youngest child of his host, the graceful companion of his walks, and whom he called his little governor,† nor finally the calm of hours employed in collecting flowers, culling plants, dreaming along the sleepy waters and interrogating God in solitude.

On the 2d of July, 1778,‡ Rousseau rose very early in the morning and went out. But instead of going to the chateau, as was his custom, he went to salute the birth of the day. He returns and infuses into his cup of coffee some plants which he had gathered in his walk, and as in presentiment of an approaching end, he feared to leave any injustice behind him, he asks them to pay a workman a small sum that was due to him. Theresa took the money and descended, but scarcely had she reached the foot of the stairs, than she heard his groans. Alarmed, she remounts, and finds him seated on a straw chair with his elbow on a commode and his features bearing a fatal imprint. Madame de Girardin soon appears. Turning towards her with an affectionate and sad air, Rousseau said to her, "Madame, I am suffering cruelly. Your sensibility should not be exposed to the proof of such a scene and of the catastrophe that will end it." He expressed, in supplicatory terms, his desire to remain alone with his wife. Madame Girardin retired. He had the windows opened, and in a deeply moved voice said, "What a brilliant day! how beautiful is the verdure! how grand is nature! Eternal being, the soul thou art about to receive into thy bosom is as pure as when it left thee. Bestow upon it this happiness, that it shall never more be in the power of men to trouble it." Then, at the sight of Theresa bathed in tears, he said to her, "Do not weep, my dear wife. The time is approaching I have so longed for. I am about to be happy." He then seated her near him, consoling her with gentle words, reproach-

* Lettre à Sophie Comtesse de ——— by René Girardin.

† Ibid.

‡ The death of Jean-Jacques gave place to a very lively controversy between Messieurs Musset Pathay and Stanislas de Girardin. It is by comparing this controversy with the work of Corancez, the letters of Madame de Stael about Rousseau, the correspondence of Grimm, the contradictory declarations of Theresa Levasseur and the official report, that we have composed this recital of the death of Jean-Jacques, the object of so many different assertions and so long enveloped in darkness.

ing himself for having invited her to share his bitter existence, and reposing in the certainty that he did not leave her without supporters and friends. He spoke of his little governor ; of the poor of the village, that they would pray for him ; of a nuptial present he had arranged for some young girls whose marriages he had arranged and which he was to give them. His pains, however, became more and more violent. Suddenly he rose up in a state of inexpressible exaltation. "Not a cloud in the heavens . . . Do you see that immense luminary ? . . . Behold God, yes, God himself . . . Ah ! I feel terrible pains in my head . . . My bowels are tearing themselves . . . Being of beings." He took some steps . . . What happened then ? There is reason to believe the pistol finished what poison had begun. Had he forgotten his beautiful letter against suicide ? Or did he judge himself to be in one of those exceptional situations in which a man receives from suffering the right to command his life ? Theresa alone was present ; and she might have denied the suicide, that they might not impute the fatality to him. What is certain is, that when they hastened thither, alarmed by her cries, they found Jean-Jacques fallen on the floor. There was a deep hole in his head, and Theresa was covered with the blood which had spouted from the forehead of her husband. They raised him up ; at ten in the morning he was dead.

On the 4th of July, his mortal remains traversed the *Isle of Poplars* at midnight. Some friends and strangers followed in silence. The air was calm ; the moon lit up the coffin.

This *Isle of Poplars* is a melancholy and obscure retreat. Low hills environ it and conceal the small lake which surrounds it, an unknown lake, whose surface the wind never torments. There are in the isle but turf, poplars and roses. And there Jean-Jacques was laid beyond the reach of human agitations, and in the midst of the flowers that he loved ; there he reposed with his face towards the rising sun.

Thus were these two great torches extinguished at an interval of a month ; Voltaire and Jean-Jacques. Their double death is one of the most imposing of historical dates ; for it determines the moment in which thought became man, and in which two rival doctrines became two revolutions.

BOOK FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

PICTURE OF THE COURT OF FRANCE.

Picture of the Court of France before the Revolution—Portrait of Louis the Sixteenth—The Royalty represented by Marie Antoinette—Situation of that Princess at the Court; her illusions; her faults—Sympathies which she inspires in the Count of Artois and the Duke of Chartres—Dark intrigues of the Count of Provence; he aspires to the Royalty, and seeks to destroy the Queen; his dissimulation—Louis the Sixteenth surrounded by the faction of his brother—Secret cause of the estrangement of Louis the Sixteenth from the Queen—Marie Antoinette and Madame Jules de Polignac; imprudent scenes—The friends of the Queen; their pleasures—Joseph the Second in France; Marie Antoinette is called the Austrian—Snare uselessly laid for Louis the Sixteenth by his brother—First source of the attacks against the honor of the Queen; She engages in a career of folly—General disaffection; threatening attitude of the Hotel de Ville; gradual weakening of the Royalty—Morals of the Courtiers; moral abdication of the Nobility—The Count Saint Germain; how he isolates the throne—Versailles insensibly abandoned; increasing importance of Paris.

THE day on which Louis the Sixteenth became king, was marked in his heart by dark presentiments. On that day he had seen around his grandfather, who was attacked by a contagious disorder, only frightened servants full of trouble, and courtiers, struggling between the temptation to fly and the fear of losing by so doing, the advantage of long baseness. A candle, which marked for those without the duration of the life of the agonized monarch, was burning in a window of the chateau; and ranged in the court, ready to mount their horses, the body guards, pages and squires, awaited impatiently for the extinguished light to give the news of the desired decease, and the signal of departure. Finally, the dying man having rendered up his soul, they hastened to the new master, when, suddenly seized with a kind of prophetic alarm, Louis the Sixteenth and Marie Antoinette knelt and exclaimed, * "guide and protect us, oh God; we are too young to reign."

Louis the Sixteenth was twenty years old, and Marie Antoinette had not attained her nineteenth year, being born on the 2d of November, 1755, the date of the earthquake at Lisbon.

Sad presage! and by how many others not less fatal had it not been followed? Men remembered, when Louis the Sixteenth mounted the

* Memoires de Madame Campan, chap. 4. p. 78, 1822.

throne, the bloody festivals of his marriage, when more than a thousand citizens were stifled beneath the rush of the multitude, and their cries of distress mounted, like a sinister prediction, through the noise of the popular rejoicings.

But the importunate phantoms soon vanished. There was a moment in which the nation appeared to collect its thoughts and kept silence. There was a something in the wrath and grief of the people so deep, that it resembled a calm; and there were those placed on the surface of the society, who went to sleep in the hopes of a peaceful to-morrow, wishing to remain in ignorance of its abysses.

What was the king doing, however? Whilst his mentor, the Count de Maurepas, was seeking food for cynical mockeries, and was smiling at the strife between the reforming ministers and the courtiers; whilst the revolutionary philosophers were conquering minds, and the miners were advancing by subterranean but sure paths to the very foot of the monarchy, the king was hunting, reciting litanies or psalms, or making locks; happy when he pleased the workman Gamain his master, whose severity he dreaded very much, or when lost in the darkness of the corridors of Versailles, and laden with the tools of his favorite work, he had reached the anvil chamber, unperceived by the queen.*

The fact is, that Louis the Sixteenth had nothing of the king about him. You could judge him at sight. His undecided step, his awkward manners, the softness of his physiognomy, his quick timidity—for like the Emperor Claudius, he was as quick to be irritated as easy to appease—all revealed his reign, and permitted his destiny to be read. It has been said that, in order the better to encourage the future elect of the people to lay their hands upon him, God had deprived him of every prestige in advance. His ancestors, in transmitting their authority to him, had left him nothing to defend it, not even the rule of appearance, not even the attitude and gesture of command. In him the restrained dignity of Louis the Fifteenth was changed into embarrassment, and the grace of Louis the Fourteenth into good nature. They were about to insult his family in his person, and he reproduced the type of that family sufficiently degenerated for the people to lose their respect. As a king, he represented the impairment of his principle; as a man, the decay of his race.

None of his ancestors, except Henry the Fourth, would have gone like him to visit a poor man in an obscure residence, nor have exclaimed on the route to the coronation, "No tapestries, I do not wish the people and myself to be prevented from seeing each other;"† but on the other hand, none of them would have demeaned his anger by brutal violence, or, as the spectator of a horse race, have wagered a crown,‡ and lowered the example of economy to that point.

Louis the Sixteenth was educated; he had a good knowledge of geography and history, and at the bottom a goodness which resisted the evil counsels of high rank. . . . But when kings take any thing else than human baseness as their point of departure, it is so difficult for them to

* Soulavie, *Memoires historiques et politiques*, t. 2. p. 47, Paris, 1801.

† Nougaret, *Règne de Louis Seize*, t. 1. p. 54, Paris, 1791.

‡ Madame de Genlis, *Souvenirs de Felicie*.

maintain themselves, that Louis the Sixteenth had his good qualities ever against him. His weakness exposed him to the contempt of the people, the correctness of his morals drew on him the disdain of the great. Separated from the people by his faults, and from the nobility by his virtues, he remained alone, a stranger to the nation on the throne, a stranger to the court in the palace, and, as it were, out of place at the head of the state.

It is related, that when Charles the First, a prisoner at Hampton Court, sought to seduce Ireton and Cromwell by his promises, the latter were secretly informed, that an unknown person would enter the Blue Boar inn at Holborn, carrying a saddle on his head which it was important to open. They went to the designated place, and the man having appeared, they followed him, ripped up the saddle with their swords, and in a letter, written to Henrietta Maria by the fugitive monarch, read : "Do not be uneasy at the concessions, . . . instead of a silk cord, I have a hempen one in reserve for them." Cromwell then decided on his course, and soon after the head of Charles the First fell at Whitehall, beneath the axe of a masked executioner. This dissimulation, so fatal to the second Stuart, was to show itself in Louis the Sixteenth. It was his misfortune, not his crime ; he became false, because he was weak.

The most heroic of mortals would have tried in vain to remain erect on the top of a building which so many battering rams were beating into ruins. And yet, if a soul enlarged by the danger, had filled the void of absent genius in him, Louis the Sixteenth might have at least given an illustrious fall to royalty ; he himself might have died enveloped in the poetry of such a disaster. But no ; that the lesson might be complete, it was necessary that the sight of an abated monarchy should be joined to that of an humiliated monarchy. It was found then that Louis the Sixteenth could neither raise himself to the level of his misfortune, nor enter into competition with his destiny. Clothed with royal majesty, he communicated to it that about it which was vulgar. In personifying it, he lost it.

Thus all eyes were from the first, turned only upon Marie Antoinette. She was then in all the splendor of her beauty, that irregular and contestable, but attractive beauty, which dazzled Versailles, disquieted Madame du Barry, and surprised Louis the Fifteenth, by agitating the ashes of his heart. The life offered to the young queen was one of enchantment. There was not a cloud upon her brow at this period, not a bitter thought which altered the limpidity of her blue eyes. Her figure, in its graceful movements, had not that lofty coldness which offended pride afterwards gave her ; and in her smiling lip, which since accustomed itself to disdain, there was yet remarked but the index of Austrian and imperial origin. Why should she be distrustful of the future ? For her, painters and poets had exhausted the art of delicate flattery. They placed her portrait in a blooming rose. Without her diamonds, and clothed in a light robe, she was compared to Atalanta in the gardens of Marley. In the theatre, her presence was saluted by vows she thought eternal, and when from the balcony of the Thuilleries the old Marshal de Brissac, showing her the pressing crowd, said, "you see they are so many lovers, Madame,"* she smiled in joy, and abandoned herself to the falsehood of happy dreams.

* *Mémoires de Madame de Campan*, p. 60.

She entered with delight upon an improvident career and culpable caprices. Of an impetuous though tender nature, and more desirous of the agitations, than the repose of love, she hastened to exhaust the pleasure of life. She rejected every thing which might have impeded the flight of her desires, or reduced her to a grave and careful happiness; and nothing found favor with her which could in the least sadden her horizon. In the public receptions before aged females, she could not always conceal behind her fan those mocking smiles, whose insult was never forgotten. At a signal from her, the court appertained to youth, that is to a taste for novelty, to a desire for easy pleasures, to imprudence. She removed from her, grumbling devotions, which are the most faithful; she banished etiquette,* that veil extended before the miseries of royalty, with an impatient hand; she changed with a laugh the consecrated and ancient forms so important in a monarchical state; that which had been established to mark the hierarchy of ranks was insensibly sacrificed to that which favored liberty in pleasure, and without wishing or knowing it, Marie Antionette served, by the revolution which she introduced into customs, the revolution which was being accomplished in minds.

We should certainly be permitted to be astonished that the predilections of a princess entirely addicted to enjoyment, her pleasures, her caprices should be considered worthy of a place in the history of men, if the importance of small things was not the very thing that characterizes the insolent regime of absolute monarchies. Circumstances thus condemned Marie Antoinette to have no private life. There are queens whose lot is to remain always out of history, which content with naming them, fear to descend too low by occupying itself with their wisdom or their errors. Such was Marie Leczinska, the obscure daughter of a decayed monarch; such could not be Marie Antoinette, for her marriage had been the consecration of the Austrian system of the Duke de Choiseul, and Europe had started at the news, that the successor of Louis the Fifteenth was about to espouse an archduchess. This connection between two families famous for their long rivalries, this alliance of the cabinets of Vienna and Versailles, so opposed to the plans of Henry the Fourth, Richelieu, and Louis the Fourteenth, was a grave and serious event. England perceived that once freed on the side of Austria, France would not be long in giving her attention to the sea; the protestant powers took umbrage at the league between the two great catholic nations; Prussia demanded with disquietude, how she was hereafter to aggrandize herself in Germany, and the house of Savoy, how it was to maintain its fragile independence between two such colossal powers. Behold what interests, prejudices, hatreds were united against the system represented by Marie Antoinette. She was then placed, whether she wished it or not, at the head of a militant party, on an immense scene. And then, like a torch kindled to lighten up her life, the glory of her mother followed her.

Thus exposed, she should have watched over all her actions and movements. But the acclamations from without seduced her, and she was consumed by the indomitable fire of youth. She was no sooner at Ver-

* *Mémoires du Comte de Tilly*, t. 1. chap. 2. p. 25. *Montjoie, Hist. de Marie Antoinette*, p. 56, *M. de Levis, Souvenirs et portraits*, p. 137.

sailles, than she commenced an existence entirely contrary to the habits of Louis the Sixteenth, taking delight in assemblies whose frivolity he condemned, abandoning the royal majesty, twice compromised, to the chances of night parties and accumulating imprudencies. One while to go to a soirée to which the king could not accompany her, she set the clock forward, and thus abandoned the dignity of her deceived spouse to the sarcasms of the court.* Now she appeared in a heron's plume which Lauzun had given her, and which he had worn in his casque;† or when dancing with Dillon, and not thinking herself overheard, she said to him, "Feel how my heart beats," and drew upon herself this harsh rebuke of the king, "Madame, M. Dillon will believe your word."‡ Her attitude before the Duke de Coigny and the indiscreet attentions of the Count d'Artois, could only receive fatal interpretations; she was not disturbed, and with lofty head and enraptured soul, she ran to meet her fall, which formidable enemies concealed in the shadow of the throne, were already plotting. For whilst the brilliant Count d'Artois§ was declaring himself the knight of the queen, and the Duke de Chartres was surrounding her with affectionate cares,|| the Count de Provence¶ was darkly essaying a part which we must know, if we desire to understand all the disgraceful mysteries which that life of courts, over which the vengeance of the revolution passed, confined.

Louis the Sixteenth had been born with a faulty conformation, which appeared to take the hope of heirs from him. This was known at Versailles, and a thousand exaggerated stories were put in circulation, whilst he was yet dauphin. They already saw the grandson of Louis the Fifteenth resigning himself to celibacy, a supposition to which neither his devotion nor his morals gave the lie; they spoke in a low voice of a consultation of physicians; they named doctors Leroy and Dessault,** they disposed differently of the future. Should Louis the Sixteenth die without children, his brother, the Count de Provence was king. Ambitious men, out of place, already began to group around this prince, and they awakened in him a thirst for reigning, the more prompt to flatter his coming fortune, since he was superior to his elder brother in intellect, information and firmness of character, and Louis the Sixteenth recognized the ascendancy of this superiority, being accustomed to say, "ask my brother de Provence."

It may be judged from this recital how lively was the sensation produced in a certain world, by the arrival of Marie Antoinette at Versailles. The plans which her marriage threatened to destroy were changed into deep hostility to her. It was admitted that Louis the Sixteenth could not have children; it was determined, should any come, to regard

* Mémoires du Comte de Tilly, t. 1. chap. 6. p. 145. Mémoires de Madame Campan, t. 1. chap. 4. p. 128.

† Mémoires de Madame Campan, t. 1. chap. 2. p. 167.

‡ Revue Retrospective, No. 1. p. 87.

§ Since, Philippe Egalité.

¶ Since, Charles the Tenth.

|| Since, Louis the Eighteenth.

** Manuscript of M. Sauquaire-Souligné. This manuscript was entrusted to us by the author himself shortly before his death; he was a witness of most of the facts stated in the notes which have been handed us, and whose correctness we have been enabled to verify by much written testimony.

them as illegitimate. The corrupt principle of hereditary right, destroyed family affections in their germ, and the perspective of losing a crown, is a terrible encouragement to hatred among relatives; Marie Antoinette being able to become a mother, they desired her to be a culprit. Then commenced the odious practice of anonymous accusations, then were scattered through the palace many libels recounting monstrous amours, amours worthy of the shameless Julia, or the unbridled lover of Silius.

Thus—let it not be forgotten—that the first blows struck at Marie Antoinette, came from the court.* When plebeians put her to death, it was long after gentlemen had defamed her.

It certainly entered into the plans of this faction to incline the vacillating mind of Louis the Sixteenth to distrust. Furtive hands placed even in his secretary pages filled with venom, and one day, on sitting down to table, he found beneath his napkin, lines which made him blush to his forehead.† A fatal curiosity soon urging him to spy out the accusations for himself, Blaizot, his librarian, received orders to place all pamphlets concerning court affairs, in an opening in a casket of which the king alone kept the key.‡ From thence arose, in part, the indifference which he exhibited during the first years of their marriage, in his intercourse with the queen, so that he partook of her bed only as a matter of duty, and frequently went to sleep without speaking to her.§ His discontent was not always confined to this silent coldness; he sometimes let it break out in vulgar and violent proceedings; witness the order given to close the outer court of the chateau at eleven o'clock, by means of which Marie Antoinette received an humiliating lesson on a return from a nocturnal promenade.|| There was nothing which was not fatal to the powers, whose hour was approaching. The scenes of the alcove, the details of intimate life, which at any other time would not have been remarked, then acquired a serious importance. The disdain of the king, and his outbreaks, were in turns signalized as vengeance and as disgraceful conduct; they opened a career to cruel conjectures, and served to prove the charges which made the public contempt mount higher and higher.

On his side, retired, apart and confined, they said, by his literary tastes, the Count de Provence maintained a prudent reserve, and followed a plan of conduct his youth contributed to veil. The age of his brother only authorized him to conceive remote, confused hopes; but either from the illusion of his impatience, or from foresight of the troubles of the state, he believed himself called to be king, and he exercised himself in it in advance by artifices of a precocious dissimulation. We

* Montjoie, *Hist. de Marie Antoinette*, p. 111 et 112. Madame Campan also recognizes this. It is important to remark that the first libels against Marie Antoinette could not have been prompted by the Duke de Chartres, who was one of her most ardent friends at this period.

† *Chronique Secrète de Paris*, by the Abbé Baudeau, year 1774, inserted in the 9th number of *Retrospective Review*, p. 383.

‡ Nougaret, *Règne de Louis Seize*, t. 1. p. 130.

§ *Mémoires de Madame Campan*, t. 1. chap. 3. p. 60.

|| Bachaumont, *Mémoires Secrètes*, t. 14. p. 155. Nougaret, *Règne de Louis Seize*, t. 1. p. 326 et 327.

will speak hereafter of his political views; at the period to which our recital leads us, the system of the prince had not been completed in his head, and he only thought of removing insidiously from his path what might be an embarrassment, or an obstacle to him. Respectful and courteous towards the queen when she was present, he congratulated her that she sowed joy everywhere around her, and encouraged her to be happy; he addressed her, on sending her a fan, some verses whose gallantry might be praised,* and gave her fêtes full of voluptuous souvenirs; but at the same time he calumniated her by artful insinuations and calculated sarcasms. They repeated his speech to the Count d'Artois, when the latter had a son: "Be careful, now, my brother, in your amours, lest you injure your heir."†

A circumstance was about to give new arms and auxiliaries to this deep enmity. Wishing to have friends whom, though queen, she could freely love, Marie Antoinette had been at first drawn towards the Princess de Lamballe, a young woman of serious affections, and who had undergone affliction in early life; Madame Jules Polignac appeared at court, and the Princess de Lamballe was immediately replaced in the affections of the queen. A mild countenance, much reserve of manner, deep dissimulation, but disregard for the cares of greatness, and an indolence ennobled by the serenity of her smile and the dreamy expression of her look. . . . Such was the Countess Jules. Her intimacy with the queen was, however, the source of the attacks which contributed most to help the fall of royalty, by degrading the royal persons.

Submissive to the direction of her sister-in-law, Diana de Polignac,‡ the countess Jules was used as an instrument for the elevation of her kindred; and in ceasing to be disinterested, her influence became odious. The favor granted to the new comers set aside rival pretensions, threatened acquired positions; the Noailles complained; without taking into the account that a fireside of dangerous rumors was established in the society of Madame de Marsan.§

Add to this, that the queen was placed between parties who were disputing for the advantage of giving her a lover, and was exposed to the vengeance of the conquered in this disgraceful strife; that she had several persons of the royal blood against her; that the Countesses of Provence and Artois regarded her with jealousy;|| that Madame Adelaide, an aunt of the queen, had always cherished strong prejudices against Austrian princesses;¶ that another aunt of the king, Madame Louise, carried on the war from within the Carmelite convent, in which her ambitious devotion was in action.** Was it not from this palace, was it not of the Archbishop of Paris, from the palace itself that some of the satires distributed for the malignity of the courtiers, came? Men dared to think and did not fear to write so, so manifest had the dissensions of the

* Bachaumont, *Mémoires Secrets*, t. 27. p. 292.

† Manuscript de M. Sauquaire—Souigny.

‡ Soulavie, *Mémoires Historiques et Politiques du règne de Louis Seize*, t. 6. p. 31.

§ *Mémoires de Madame Campan*, t. 1. chap. 3. p. 64.

|| Soulavie, *Mémoires du règne de Louis Seize*, t. 6. p. 6.

¶ Ibid.

** *Chronique Secrète de Paris*, par l'Abbé Baudeau.

royal family become. Thus from all sides hostile looks watched the steps of the queen, and were fixed upon her faults.

She, intrepid and bold in her frivolity, braved discontent, treated advice with disdain. By what right did they pretend to regulate the beatings of her heart? Was that high rank, whose majesty conceals so bitter a treasure of constraint and ennui, to be transformed into servitude for her? And she yielded herself rashly and without reserve to the friendship of a female, before whom she could exclaim, "God be praised, I am no longer queen."*

Still, if she had known how to preserve silence! But no; what tempted her was the glory of an avowed, shining tenderness; "I am the most anxious of the two to embrace,"† she wrote to her friend. She went to pass long hours with her, which always flowed by too swiftly; and when alarmed by a good fortune, which so many hatreds threatened, or wounded in the excessive delicacy of her pride, Madame de Polignac spoke of separation, it was by falling on her knees, and mingling supplications and tears that Marie Antoinette essayed to retain her.‡ Fatal scenes, whose secret the Count d'Artois was the first to divulge, which had been revealed to him through a partially opened door. "I have disconcerted two friends,"§ he said heedlessly to every one, and accompanied his words with a smile.

Who were, moreover, the confidants of the queen, who should have been a moral rampart for her? Was it the Baron de Benseval, a corrupt and light soul, a Swiss officer, thinner, beneath the appearance of military rotundity, that French of the *Œil-de-bœuf*? Was it M. de Vaudreuil, the presumed lover of the Countess Jules,|| or M. d'Adhemar, her ambitious confidant? Was it M. de Guines, who, proud of having played on the flute with the great Frederic,¶ amused himself with continual persiflage, and thus amassed resentments about him? Was it the Duke de Lauzun, gay, elegant, loved by the women, but capable, by his vanity, of dishonoring his success? The only one of the friends of the queen who would not have compromised her, was the very man whom the council of the intimates had wished to make her lover; it was M. de Coigny, a grave, modest and disinterested person.**

The hour of dark thoughts, the tragical hour was approaching with rapidity. But none of those whom the storms were to strike thought of them. Enervating fêtes, diversions of mad singularity filled up the last leisure left by fortune to so many perilous existences. Now it was knights, fictitious rivals of the *preux chevaliers* of Charlemagne, who in sumptuous gardens and beneath trees, in which lancers and bucklers

* Montjoie, Hist. de Marie Antoinette, p. 105.

† Ibid., p. 162.

‡ Mémoires de Besenval, t. 2. p. 107.

§ Unedited fragments of the Mémoires du Prince de Ligne, published by la Revue Nouvelle.

|| See les Mémoires Historiques et Politiques, t. 6. p. 30, et les Mémoires du Comte de Tilly, t. 1. chap. 6. p. 141.

¶ Mémoires de Besenval, t. 2. p. 90.

** See on this subject the avowals made in his Mémoires, t. 2. chap. 17. by the Count de Tilly, one of the most ardent defenders of Marie Antoinette, and her passionate admirer.

were suspended, remained plunged in a magic sleep, until the queen, suddenly appearing, deigned to break the charm;* now, after reading some page concerning the loves of the stags, these gentlemen conceived a fancy to have garments made of buckskin, and to plunge, thus metamorphosed, into the most shady recesses of the Park;† now, in those rigorous winter days, which are the despair of the poor, Marie Antoinette and the lords of her train, trampled the snow of the Boulevards, beneath their rapid sledges, representing lions, or stags, or baskets of flowers. The hours of decay have their appropriate enjoyments; to act a comedy, and to do so in a furtive manner, became an amusement dear to the daughter of Maria Theresa. In the times when the nobility had manly passions, they gave tournaments as figurative of war; now it was dancers who, mixed with nobles, wore the colors of ladies, in fêtes gotten up to represent tournaments.

Such was then the aspect of the court, when an unexpected event gave birth to accusations whose bearing was fatal.

In the month of April, 1777, there was seen and remarked in the capital, dressed in a simple brown dress, and mixing willingly with the crowd, a stranger, with odd manners, light hair, thick lip, and whose features were evidently those of a brother of the queen. Strange things were told of him; that instead of taking up his abode in the palace, he sought an obscure residence at a hotel; that he slept on the skin of a wild beast;‡ that he frequently ate standing;§ that he showed strong affection for the people and contempt for the great; that he was possessed with an insatiable desire to see every thing, know every thing, rail at every thing, touch every thing. He took the title of Count, and was called Falkenstein; but his true title was emperor, and his true name Joseph the Second.

To humble the priests for ever, and in the person of a philosophical monarch, to give its Gregory the Seventh to an avenged empire; to upset from top to bottom a vast kingdom; to remake a people by ordinances; to finish in a day what it took God ages to accomplish, and to substitute himself for history; to save men, but without troubling himself about their wishes, without loving them, without fearing, and by treating them like cards, subject to the combinations of a player, was what Joseph the Second, a prince, whom excess of pride reduced to a blustering impotence, but who possessed genius at least to the state of intoxication, and who never deceived himself but in heroic proportions, dreamed. A revolutionary despot, he seemed to have divined that Paris would hereafter be the workshop of the revolutions of the world, and he hastened thither, urged by a sort of jealous curiosity.

The archduke Maximilian had been in France already, and had left unpleasant recollections behind him. Joseph the Second had no difficulty in effacing them; he astonished the court and charmed the city. They admired him by turns, rough and affable, avoiding arranged homages, rallying at Versailles, studying the people in the midst of the people,

* Mémoires de Madame Campan, t. 1. p. 162.

† Mémoires Historiques et Politiques, t. 6. p. 50.

‡ L'Espion Anglais, t. 6. p. 140.

as the czar Peter did, and comprehending that where the crowd was shivering, there the heart of France was at that period beating. He could be found seated on a post before a public garden, awaiting the opening of the gates,* and more than once he forgot himself in one of those tragical taverns in which the life of the clubs was already grumbling lowly. Not wishing to pay for his glory by flatteries to renowned distributors of it, he was unwilling to visit the famous lord of Ferney; but in Paris no one was ignorant with what grace he had besought the sick Buffon not to put off his morning gown to receive him,† and with what respectful emotion he had saluted the modest, the immortal abbé de l' Epée. He visited the hotel of the Invalides, which Louis the Sixteenth had never entered.‡ At the Hotel Dieu he assisted in dressing the wounds of the wounded, and tasted the broth of the poor, and his indignation escaped in vehement language, when he saw lying side by side upon the same pallet a convalescent, a man in a fever, a dying man and a corpse.§

Behold what features marked this journey, and if it became fatal to Maria Theresa, it was because attentive enemies, even on the very steps of the throne were watching her. Joseph the Second, having gone to see France in its principal cities after having seen it in Paris, they began to sow suspicions. They were alarmed at the earnestness of a foreigner to know all about our ports, our dock-yards, our manufactures, our arsenals; to inquire into our resources, to learn the secret of our greatness. They asked ironically, if Joseph the Second had only been led by the caprice of a traveller to take steps with certain merchants of Brest and Havre, suitable to diminish our maritime commerce for the advantage of his own;|| and if it were a very disinterested ill humor that he had exhibited in the bitterness of his glance, and the alteration of his countenance at the sight of the marvels of Lyonnese industry. Inconceivable folly to rely upon a prince grown up amid the resentments of Vienna. For could they have forgotten that history had erected barriers between the houses of Bourbon and Austria? Could they have forgotten that his mother had been recently pursued by our armies, and urged to the verge of despair? Was he not the very child whom Maria Theresa presented to her warlike Hungarians, when adjured to hate France, they exclaimed, drawing their swords, "*Moriamur pro nostro rege, Maria Theresa?*" They must then be careful, they must fear lest fatal instructions should have been given to the Queen by her brother. . . . These accusations insensibly became envenomed and extended themselves. They accused Marie Antoinette of having called the petit Trianon, Schœnbrunn, which was false.|| They accused her, but now with truth, of introducing changes into the fashions which were disastrous to our national industry, and which tended to favor the linen manufactures of the Low Countries, in accordance with the views of Joseph the Second.** Was

* Annales de Linguet, t. 1. p. 239.

† Ibid. p. 235.

‡ L'Espion Anglaise, t. 1. p. 233.

§ Annales de Linguet, t. 1. p. 233.

|| Mémoires historiques et politiques, t. 6. p. 23.

¶ Mémoires de Madame de Campan, t. 1. p. 111.

** Mémoires historiques et politiques, t. 6. p. 41.

not the adoptance and giving a prevalence to the custom of dressing in white, to proscribe silk goods, enrich Brussels and ruin Lyons? Lively complaints arose; the aunts of the king were entreated to present a memorial in which the complaints of the Lyonnese merchants were set forth;* they said, they repeated that Maria Theresa had sent us her daughter to avenge her; the queen was called the *Austrian*. The *Austrian*! formidable word on which the revolution seized, and which we are to hear resound at the foot of the scaffold.

The plan conceived by Maria Theresa of influencing powerfully the policy of France, through her daughter, could not be doubted. Marie Antoinette had received on her departure from Vienna, a list, in her mother's hand-writing, of those with whom she was to act in concert when she should be at Versailles; they were the Choiseuls, Praslins, brothers de Montayet, d'Estrées, d'Aubeterre, la Beauvau, the nun, etc.

. . . The note said, "consult with Meroy. I recommend in general, all the Lorraines to you."† There was consequently a resolution agreed upon from the beginning, to create in the bosom of the court of France, a party entirely devoted to Austria; and Maria Theresa had not ceased to labor for the consolidation of her work, by secret instructions addressed directly to the wife of a prince, whose incapacity she knew. But Marie Antoinette was too young, and too much occupied with her pleasures to give any place in her existence to the torments of politics. Besides counselled by his minister for foreign affairs, Louis the Sixteenth was on his guard against Austria, and Marie Antoinette inspired such distrust in him, that during the life of M. de Vergennes, she never entered the cabinet, placed immediately below the ante chamber, the highest in the chateau.‡ The accusations raised against Marie Antoinette by the journey of Joseph the Second, were only just concerning matters of fashion or ceremonial. She did not completely deserve to be called the *Austrian*, until the time when the tempest arose, and then the chastisement was terrible.

Faithful, however, to his part, the Count de Provence studied to produce active causes of misunderstanding between Louis the Sixteenth and the queen. Persuaded that the estrangement existing between them would terminate unless he could give a mistress to the king, he surrounded him with a thousand snares concealed beneath smiling externals. All the refinements which could render the dominion of pleasure attractive, all the temptations of a nature to awaken a sleeping soul were united by him in the fêtes of Brunoy. Louis the Sixteenth found himself there in the midst of women whom the master of the place had carefully selected, and who had been warned of the object—women of depraved morals, but provoking beauty, and accomplished in the art of seductions.§ Where are we to stop on the road to evil, when we

* *Mémoires historiques et politiques*, t. 6. p. 42.

† This note is found in extenso in Soultavie.

‡ *Mémoires historiques et politiques*, t. 6. p. 26.

§ Conversations collected in London, 1807—See in the *Mémoires de Bachaumont* what he has drawn about these fêtes—The same fact is reported in the *Mémoires de Mademoiselle Bertin*, p. 63 et 64. Only the Count de Provence is there designated by these words, "The most powerful of the queen's enemies." Digitized by Google

believe that happiness consists alone in wearing a crown, and that there is but one desire, hope, passion, end, to reign? The Count de Provence would have wished to penetrate, one by one, the sentiments of Louis the Sixteenth, to establish himself in the sanctuary of his thoughts; and to attain this, no means appeared to him to be too vile. Ignorant of English, and remarking that the king, to whom this language was familiar, frequently used it in his presence as a concealment against him, he took into his service as a valet de chambre, a professor of English, to whom a severe discretion was applied.* He began by pursuing his studies assiduously without taking any one into his confidence, and the Count de Provence was soon enabled to understand what his brother said before him, without thinking he was understood.

Vain artifices! the event dreaded by the Count de Provence, at last happened. The devotion of Louis the Sixteenth, the rigor of the principles which had presided over his education, the natural gravity of his manners, his very timidity, every thing contributed to save him from the scandal of those adulterous amours of which Louis the Fourteenth and Louis the Fifteenth had left him an example. And on the other hand, he suffered from the idleness of youth. He could not persevere to the end in the part of indifference which he had selected. The obstacles which were at first thought insurmountable having yielded to medicine, his estrangement from the queen gave place to a strong and not very delicate affection, which subjected him. Thus it was not long in being noised abroad that Marie Antoinette was about to become a mother, and on the 19th of September, 1778, she gave birth to a daughter. Great was the emotion. Some already saw her at a point of credit which nothing could hereafter balance, and then a strange fact is related at this time which shows well from what quarter so many poisoned darts came. A few days after her confinement, the queen received a small box from a curate of Paris containing her wedding ring. The following note accompanied the box, "I received, in the secrecy of the confessional, your majesty's wedding ring, with the avowal that it was stolen in 1771, to be used as a charm to prevent your having children."†

The baptism of *Madame* approached and gave place to a no less characteristic incident.‡ The ceremony began, when the grand almoner, addressing the Count de Provence, who held his niece at the baptismal font, asked him what name he had chosen. "Monsieur," immediately replied the prince, in a sardonic tone and with outrageous affectation, "this question is not the first you should address to me; you should inquire first about the father and mother." Astonished and confused, the prelate replied that the question was only necessary in cases of doubt. "Now," he added, "there is none here, for every one knows that Madame is born of the king and queen." "Is that your opinion, Monsieur Curé," said the count, turning towards the curate of Notre

* We have had this fact from a very grave and learned magistrate, whom we will name if necessary.

† *Mémoires de Madame Campan*, t. 1. p. 208.

‡ Manuscript of M. Sauquaire. *Souligny et Mémoires secrets de Bachaumont*, t. 13. p. 254.

Dame, who was present, and as if to prolong the outrageous scene. There was a number present, the circumstance was a solemn one. A cruel smile appeared upon the lips of some; the more honest were secretly indignant, and it was in the midst of a rumor designedly provoked that the curate replied, "As a general thesis your royal highness is right, but in the present case I should not do otherwise than as the grand almoner has done."

From this day the pamphlets were multiplied, and the hatred that dictated them never slept. Dark charges, in which accusations but too well founded, mixed with the sharpness of calumny, accustomed men's minds to calumnies which history would blush to mention, if it were not right to assign their true origin to libels which the enemies of the French revolution have collected in its lowest depths.

And singular thing, the more violent and dangerous the attacks became, the more did the queen appear to take pleasure in setting herself against appearances. The pride which hardens is a fatigue; it is moreover one of the privileges of power to essay unpunished hardihood; one might have said that Marie Antoinette desired to measure her power by her caprices. She was seen one day at Marly in a hack-cabriolet and driving it with her royal hand.* All Paris rung with a nocturnal course of the queen disguised in a hackney coach.† The public rejoicings attracted her; and when she was discovered, half hid in the midst of the tumult, she was but little disquieted. Had she not been seen to seek passionately the dangers of the opera balls, and lose herself in their turmoil, happy and trembling behind her mask? And in those embalmed, languishing nights, whose enchantment the music of the French guards completed, and which she was accustomed to pass in the terrace of the park, mixed up with crowds of promenaders, did she not, dressed in a robe of fine white calico and a simple straw hat, seat herself on the benches which the darkness hid to watch there the moment of some surprise and of unexpected emotions? One might blame her and we are permitted to pity her. Brought up by the Abbé de Vermond, a softened Dubois, surrounded by seductions and snares; united to a prince whose very gaiety was oppressive, how should she, so docile to the command of passing fancies and vain thoughts, sometimes not steal away from the despotism of respect?

But not to belong to one's self is the law of high situations. By a just retort of equality, it is necessary when we enjoy greatness, that we should be the first to submit to it. Marie Antoinette forgot this too much, and a disaffection as overwhelming as rapid came to warn her, by striking her. The birth of her daughter had been saluted by those bursts of servile joy, which, in a monarchical state, seize on the people when chance sends them masters; the birth of the dauphin was heard three years afterwards with coldness, or rather with insult. It was publicly rumored, that, at the instigation of the Count de Provence, twelve peers had signed a circular protest, in which the legitimacy of the son of the queen was attacked in formal terms.‡ It is certain that the magistrates

* Bachaumont, t. 27. p. 231.

† Mémoires de Madame Campan, t. 1. p. 165.

‡ Manuscript of M. Sauquaire-Souligné.

of the city affected an indifference suitable to give credit to the suspicions. They delayed so long, ordering the usual diversions, that Marie Antoinette exclaimed, in a fit of ill humor, "Are we to wait for the fetes until the new born shall be old enough to see them and to dance at them."* The desired fetes were at last given. But they were silent and sad. Every one remarked the calculated shabbiness of the fire-works. At the Hotel de Ville, the tables were served up so as to humble the guests; and sugar figures appeared at the dessert, which presented offensive allusions.† Thus was announced from afar the formidable hatred of the commune of Paris.

A monarch thrown back to the second place, an insulted queen, behold what personified the monarchy at a period when the falsehoods of prestige were more than ever necessary; and before this throne, henceforth incapable of defending itself alone, no one to defend it; for princes and nobles appeared to strive to precipitate it towards dishonor and death. Do not ask what the natural guardians of old institutions and things are doing upon the undermined soil of the monarchy. Whilst his two brothers were engaged, this in watchmaking, and that in vile machinations, the Count d'Artois was enjoying masked balls. The Duke of Orleans was extinguishing in the arms of Madame de Montesson, his secret wife, the remains of an existence used up by the amours of the opera. His son, the Duke de Chartres, was dividing his time between play, gross pleasures and lessons in juggling.‡ The rude, infirm and decayed representative of the illegitimate descendants of Louis the Fourteenth, was passing his old age in hunting in a carriage of a new invention. The Prince de Lamballe died under the kisses of shameless reatures.

There was the same decay, with a few glorious examples, among the mass of the nobility. When the Abbé de Terray determined to tax the citizens in proportion to their titles, a crowd of nobles were encountered at the treasury coming to declare, beneath the empire of sordid inquietude, that they were not noble, that they did not wish to be so; and this movement of moral abdication was only to assume a more and more disgraceful character hereafter. Upon the elevated scene on which the wives of lieutenant-generals and duchesses moved proudly, many a solemn union ascended, not of plebeian virgins, but of women disputed for and stolen from the embraces of play actors, of courtesans, publicly sold to the pleasures of foreign ambassadors. To espouse the daughter of an opulent financier, for the sole purpose of enriching himself became the proceedings of the gentry. This was carried to such a point, that a ruined marquis received the degrading authority from the officers of his corps, to mend his fortune by marrying one of the pupils of Paris, a celebrated procuress of the day;§ and they called it in language as degraded as the action itself, *procuring manure to enrich their lands*. There were actions for robbery in which people of quality figured, and there were accusations of assassination exchanged between great lords, and judicial proceedings substituted for reparation by the sword.

* Montjoie, Hist. de Marie Antoinette, p. 134.

† L'Espion Anglais, t. 1. p. 187.

‡ Ibid. p. 136.

§ Ibid. p. 226 et 227.

What was still required to make an absolute and mortal solitude around the throne? A minister hostile to military privileges, and a systematic destroyer of the king's household. This minister was found, for it is the property of grave circumstances to create men suitable for them.

When M. du Muy died in 1775, leaving the ministry of war vacant, there was residing at Lauterbach, in Alsace, an old soldier whose mystic devotion, beneficence and biting speeches the inhabitants loved to cite. His name was Saint-Germain. First a Jesuit, then a lieutenant of dragoons, and forced to fly in consequence of a bloody duel, he had carried far away the double oddness of his character and destiny. Recalled into France by Marshal Saxe, after having accompanied the fortune of Eugene, served Austria, served Bavaria, fought the Turks, he had reached rapidly the grade of a general officer, and though in only secondary commands, he had, more than any one during the seven years war, broken the course of our disasters, and embarrassed the genius of Frederick. It was at the time in which Madame de Pompadour decided the direction and disposed of the fate of our armies. Now this rude officer despised very much princes, flatterers and favorites, and as it was his principle *to aim as high as his star permitted*,* he became tired of obeying courtier generals who did not value him. His services, thought too little of by the Marshal de Broglie, became turned to bitterness. He complains, he makes a noise, he believes himself surrounded by mysterious persecutors, he writes in his original and animated style, "they hand-me over all naked, to the bites of the wasps," and one fine day suddenly deserting his corps, casting his red ribbon behind him, abandoning his country in sorrow, he hastens with a secret treaty in his hand to overthrow the military constitution of Denmark. His reforms irritated by their violence; power escaped from him in exile; a defaulting banker reduced him to want, and having retired to Lauterbach, he was in the act of planting a tree with his head covered with a woollen cap, when they came to announce to him his appointment as minister of war by Louis the Sixteenth. "Ha, ha, he said in a triumphant and bitter tone, they think of me." Having no domestic,† he besought a peasant to follow him and started.

It is believed that it was the illuminati of Germany, and especially the Count de Blecken,‡ who brought about this appointment. Having surprised the apathy of Louis the Sixteenth, it pleased the caustic humor of the Count de Maurepas, who was curious to see a reformer at work who was said to be at once a madman and a hero, and who recalled that other mystic adventurer, by whom the court of Louis the Fifteenth had been amused.

The truth is the presence of the Count de Saint-Germain at Fontainebleau was a theatrical stroke. A deserter become a minister. A devotee at the head of the licentious warriors of the *Œil-de-bœuf*. The man of the camp and village amidst the languor and magnificence of the court. It was known besides that he exercised a kind of fascination over ardent

* Soulavie, *Mémoires historiques et politiques*, t. p. 3. 69.

† Nougaret, *Règne de Louis Seize*, t. 3. p. 157.

‡ Soulavie, t. 3. p. 59.

minds ; that he had made many fanatics in the army ; that at the news of the bankruptcy that ruined him, the German regiments had clubbed together to assure him a pension of sixteen thousand livres, and that on paying his part of the tribute the Baron de Wurenser had said as if prophetically, "One should never fall out with the unfortunate."* He, without paying regard to his present fortune, was impatient to avenge past injuries. He was finally in a situation to place his foot on the head of those privileged ones whose insolence had formerly weighed upon him. The soldier of fortune would have the honor of annihilating the privileged military. And certainly nothing was better suited to the genius of the Count de Saint-Germain, which on a field of battle was calm and observing, but which was every where else restless, turbulent and impassioned. It is related that having purchased a property at Mont Fermeil, he hastened to demolish the chateau, cut down the woods, tearing up the gardens, and keeping only the land and ruins ; this was a picture of his administration. He destroyed with a secret joy and violent hand, every thing which tended to give splendor and strength to the throne. He made the roads free, which on the 5th and 6th of October, and the 16th of August, were to conduct the risen people to the monarch.†

Until then the principle of inequality under arms had been represented by the gray musketeers, the black musketeers, the horse grenadiers, the light horse, the gendarmes ; he suppressed the two companies of musketeers, reformed the grenadiers, and contented himself with reducing the number of light horse and gendarmes to fifty, which was done only from regard to the Prince de Soubise and the Duke d'Aiguillon, their commanders.‡

The military school at Paris was essentially a monarchical institution ; only the sons of nobles were admitted into it ; they were educated at the expense of the sovereign ; they were taught in it, that honor consisted in giving their lives and souls to the prince ; M. de Saint-Germain divided the school, attempted in vain to send it from Paris into the provinces, and decided that every Frenchman could send his sons to it as boarders, substituting for an education for which the king paid, an education for which they paid the king.§

The Hotel of the Invalides recalled the glory of Louis the Fourteenth ; it appeared to attest the solicitude of royalty for the soldier ; the Count de Saint-Germain drove the veterans who inhabited the hotel from it, gave them pensions, and dispersed them.

It was not enough perhaps to introduce, among the troops, a spirit of independence, and a passion for equality. M. de Saint-Germain, by changing the old discipline, and subjecting the army to corporal punishments,|| disposed the soldiers to revolt, and indirectly, without knowing it, prepared that great alliance of the people and the soldier which was afterwards concluded before the drawbridge of the Bastille.

* Nougaret, Règne de Louis Seize, t. 3. p. 157.

† Ibid. p. 167.

‡ Mémoires du Prince de Montbarrey, the successor of Count Saint Germain, in the war department, t. 2. p. 160.

§ Soulavie, t. 3. p. 66.

|| This did not arise from cruelty, for he suppressed the penalty of death heretofore inflicted on all deserters, without distinction.—See Mémoires du Comte de Saint-Germain, p. 87.

But lo, in the midst of his impatience for reform, this strange person is seized with vertigo. His imagination wanders. The inspirations of the monk are mingled confusedly in his troubled head with the remembrances of the garrison, and from this unforeseen mixture spring a thousand monstrous or puerile plans.* Captains will be prohibited from giving balls in garrisons; generals will be prohibited from assembling more than twenty-four officers at their tables; soldiers will be required to go to mass in procession; benedictines will be commissioned to form the pupils of the military school, etc. etc. There was an explosion of discontent, vehement pamphlets were issued.† On the day of the dispersal of the Invalides, one of the carriages which carried them away, stopped on the Place of Victory, and the poor old men were seen to descend from it, and kneel around the statue of Louis the Fourteenth, and lament that "they had lost their father;" the ordinance, in regard to blows with the flat part of the sword, provoked scenes of a still more powerful effect. In order to avoid applying a penalty, against which all the principles of honor revolted, corporals descended into the rank of privates.‡ A subaltern officer constrained to strike his inferior twenty-five blows, stopped at the twenty-fourth, saying, "I reserve the last for myself," and sheathed the iron in his own body.§ "The French, said a grenadier, love only the edge of the sabre," and the whole army repeated this heroic speech with sombre exaltation. Attacked by the philosophers, whom his devotion irritated, by the great, the victims of his reforms, by the bureaux,|| whose despotism he wished to break, M. de Saint-Germain fell. But he did not fall, until after he had changed the king's household, until having accomplished his revolutionary mission. An instrument of destruction set in motion by a power which he served without knowing it, he resembled the axe which the woodman casts aside, when the tree has fallen.

Thus was this old monarchy rent by shreds; thus was the physiognomy of the court metamorphosed, and towards the close could Louis the Fourteenth have revisited, he would not have known his own Versailles. It was not that the nobles had renounced their pretensions; it was only through an equitable decree, that those very persons who had preserved the pride of their pretensions, took pleasure in rending the veil which might hide their insolence from the eyes of the deceived people. The queen having given the signal of ease in customs and manners, the old etiquette no longer existing, but in the regrets of some disdainful dowagers, trains having disappeared, and a duchess being no longer distinguishable from an actress,¶ the men, in their turn, piqued themselves on following the impulse. Among those lords who thought themselves of a chosen race, it was regarded as stylish and philosophical to wear coarse cloth, to leave off red heels, to wear thick shoes, and to be lost in the crowd, with a knotted stick in the hand.** They gradually renounced a

* *Mémoires Secrets de Bachaumont*, t. 10. p. 5.

† *Requete des soldats à la reine et lettre d'un grenadier du regiment de Champagne à un de ses camarades à l'hôtel des invalides.*

‡ *L'Espion Anglais*, t. 3. p. 428.

§ *Ibid.* p. 429.

|| *Mémoires du Prince de Montbarrey*, t. 3. p. 154.—*Mémoires du Comte de Saint-Germain*, p. 11 et 12.

¶ *Montjoie, Hist. de Marie Antoinette*, p. 100 et 101.

** *Ibid.*

train of valets, brilliant embroideries, nobility written on their garments, all that is visible and palpable in greatness, all that had until then rendered the pre-eminence of ranks living and speaking.

When Louis the Fourteenth had removed the royal majesty from Paris, when he had placed it at Versailles among its own, he had doubtless wished to give the hatred of the people so many mediums to traverse, that it should find a difficulty in reaching the monarch. But it happened that, fascinated by her destiny, Marie Antoinette was passionately fond of Paris. Life then gradually abandoned that palace which human vanity and baseness had chosen as a theatre for their prodigies. Solitude and silence finally invaded the famous antechamber, in which was the select valet, which a mere skreen separated from the first powers of the earth, and whose voice always respected, chased clouds of counts and barons through the gallery of the chateau. Day by day and hour by hour, the number of those diminished, who grouped of a night at the door of the royal cabinet, waited with a servile and jealous impatience, that a salute, a smile, a look from their master might decide their fortune. They had long said, "the court and the city;" the time was coming when the terms were to be reversed. They left Versailles, where the king was; they hastened to Paris, where the people were.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST MINISTRY OF NECKER.

The first Ministry of Necker—The American War accustoms France to prepossessions for Liberty—The Duke de Chartres and the Queen after the battle of Ushant—The plans of Necker—Astonishing success of his Loans—A war without taxation—The sovereignty of *Public Opinion* recognized—Enthusiasm of the Women for Necker—The Provincial Assemblies the image of the States General—The consequence of the operations of Necker—*The Chamber aux Deniers*; scandal of the *Pensions*—THE STATEMENT—Financial paradox and unperceived artifice of the figures of this famous Statement—Extraordinary movement impressed on *Public Opinion*—Court intrigue; fall of Necker—Popular indignation.

LORD CHATHAM having one day entered the House of Lords, the assembly rose respectfully at his appearance. He advanced tottering, supported on one side by his son-in-law, and on the other by his second son. His figure was extremely pale, for he carried the germs of a fatal sickness beneath the flannel in which he was enveloped. He came to excite Parliament to defend, sword in hand and to the last, the integrity of the British possessions against America, sustained by France. His speech finished, he fell exhausted on his seat; and as the Duke of Richmond asked him how the government should sustain the war, he rose to reply, but could only place his hand upon his heart, and fainted. He died a few days afterwards. His pride and his hatred lived in his second son, William Pitt.

When Lord Chatham was thus exhaling the jealous ardor of his Carthaginian soul, Louis the Sixteenth had already recognized the independence of the United States; a treaty had united France and America, two nations, of which, one was combatting for its independence, the other was about to combat for its liberty. How was this great action accomplished? By what vertigo had the friends of an absolute king been pushed on to hold out their hands to *insurgents*?

France had doubtless many humiliations to avenge. It was time that she protested, like a strong people, against the ignominious treaty of Fontainebleau, against the insolent abuse which England had made of its victory, and against that permanent insult which she could no longer tolerate, the presence of an English commissioner at Dunkirk. Could there be a more favorable occasion. After an intrepidly sustained struggle, the Americans appeared to be on the eve of a definite triumph. General Burgoyne had been forced, in the month of October, 1777, to lay down his arms at Saratoga before the insurgents, commanded by General Gates, and an English army of nearly six thousand men, had been led prisoners to Boston, whilst Washington, in his entrenched camp at Valley Forge, showed that the genius of patience weighs in the scales of affairs.

But, thanks to one of those combinations of fortune too frequent to astonish the historian, it happened that in France the feeling of nationality served but to blind the penetrating minister by whom the foreign affairs were managed; for the man who prepared the American war, who presented the three plenipotentiaries, Silas Deane, Lee and Franklin, to Louis the Sixteenth, was that very Count de Vergennes, who wrote to Louis the Sixteenth, "In France the monarch speaks; the people is every thing, and every thing obeys."*

And what will, moreover, could have resisted that cry from the whole people of France, Let us arm for the insurgents? In vain did the court seek to stop the voluntary departure of the young Marquis de la Fayette; all hearts were rolled round† on the same day as his own. At Paris, Versailles, even in the apartments of the king, they fêted the modest Franklin, compared to the sages of antiquity, and admitted to the chateau in the dress of an American farmer.‡ They sold beneath the eyes of the king the medallion of the philosopher, having as its legend the well-known verse in which Turgot glorified for having wrested the thunder-bolt from heaven and the *sceptre from tyrants*.

It is done; Europe is informed of the resolutions of the court of Versailles; the Marquis de Noailles, our ambassador, is called from London. Some months, however, pass by without any noise; but the dock-yards are filled with workmen, the arsenals with munitions and arms. France was about to take the sea with sixty-one ships of the line and sixty-seven frigates or corvettes.

* Rapport Confidentiel au Roi par M. de Vergennes.

† The expression of La Fayette himself. See his Memoirs published by his family, t. 1. p. 9.

‡ Memoirs of Madame Campan, t. 1. p. 232.

§ The English Observer, vol. 8. letters 4 and 5.

|| Botta, Hist. de la Guerre de l'Independance des Etats Unis, p. 3. p. 300.

The war was not yet officially declared, when they suddenly learned of the brilliant rencontre of *la Belle Poule* and *the Arethusa*, the bold conduct of the officer Chadeau de la Clochéterie, who alone, in sight of the English fleet, had replied with his whole broadside to the first shot from a foreign and henceforth hostile frigate. This prelude awakened the most manly recollections of the French; it revived immortal resentments.

One month passed, and the battle of Ushant opens the war. Sallying from Brest, the squadrons of the Count d'Orvilliers encounter the fleet of Admiral Keppel. Two worlds are attentive to the beginning of this quarrel, whose object is the independence of a nation of republicans. If the French were not completely victorious, the honor of the combat at least remained with them, and when the news was carried to Paris by the Duke de Chartres, afterwards Phillipe Egalité, the Parisians broke out into transports. The prince had fought in the van under the eyes of Lamothe-Piquet; it was known; it was known that dressed in a white vest, and decorated with the order of a knight of the Holy Ghost, he had displayed that gaiety in the midst of danger which is the French side of bravery; he was crowned with laurels at the opera; and during the whole night, the Palais Royal, illuminated, resounded with popular acclamations.

The queen, instead of having a *Te Deum* chanted the next day for the victory, had one chanted for her pregnancy; for her intercourse with the Duke de Chartres, at first affectionate and familiar, had become embittered. Her enemies did not fail to attribute this coldness to the deep resentment of slighted love; and we are assured that the prince himself boasted that he had repulsed the happiness offered him; a serious charge, if we can believe it well founded, as nothing can be more odious in such case than falsehood, or viler than indiscretion. Be it as it may, stinging epigrams were published, and the *Gazette de France*, the court journal, published a statement which made the hero of the evening a coward. It circulated accounts of his not having seen the fire, being hidden in the lowest hold. Irritated for ever, he said aloud, and caused it to be told the queen, "*The child of Coigny shall never be my king.*"*

An impulse was given to the minds of men. The idea of insurrection became familiar; the word *insurgents* was accepted everywhere, and even those who objected to assistance being given by a monarch to rebels, were pleased at the sight of England, punished at last for the long excesses of her pride. La Fayette, after his arrival in America, wrote to his friends in France, "I hear no one here speak of the king or of ministers; but the sovereigns cherished here, are glory and liberty."† France thus resembled a slave, who, through the bars of his dungeon, perceives afar troops armed against slavery; the shouts which he hears go to his heart, and he fights in thought beneath that flag whose sight alone is a hope of deliverance to him.

When the logic of history has spoken, the facts must obey it; thus

* Mémoires Historiques et Politiques de Règne de Louis Seize, t. 6. p. 55.

† Nougaret, Règne de Louis Seize, t. 4. p. 467.

they are then seen produced in useful order and as at a designated point. Contemplated from our shores, the American war was one of those phenomena whose place is indicated beforehand in the succession of things ; and at the same time that it exalted souls, it increased the deficit.

Necker was however in power, and never perhaps had a finance minister attained it in a more difficult conjuncture and in the midst of so many dangers. But that very fact stimulated the ambition of the Genevese. He was delighted to measure himself with the greatness of a situation in which he should be seen from all quarters and which would permit of novelties. Accused by the economists of having become rich too fast, he burned to prove that he knew how to administer the fortune of a kingdom as well as he did to make his own. What obstacles had arrested his upward march and still awaited him ! What suspicions did his quality as a stranger, his republican nationality awaken. It was necessary that his religion should be pardoned, he a convinced and austere protestant, in the bosom of a catholic monarchy, in a circle of libertine marquises who did not think themselves freed from the obligation of going to mass. He must forget the misfortune of his plebeian extraction in a corrupt court, which thought to overwhelm by calling him affectedly *Mister* Necker. To enable him to free himself from such things, much more serious embarrassments presented themselves to his thoughts. The greatest of those was the American war ; and yet instead of opposing it or appearing alarmed by it, Necker exhibited, in the presence of Maurepas and Vergennes, the serenity of a genius full of resources, and promised to fight England by wresting from her the secret of her strength, credit.

No one however knew better than Necker the deplorable state of our finances. As the director of the royal treasury under the ministry of Clugny, and then as adjunct to the comptroller general, Taboureaux, he had handled all the springs of the administration. Clugny, who was called to the finances, sick and in debt, paid his debts and died. Taboureaux felt humbled at having as an adjunct one who proudly made his superiority felt, and retired. But whilst the insufficiency of Taboureaux and the debaucheries and dilapidations of Clugny* placed in relief the capacity, laborious ardor and integrity of Necker, he was silently calculating both the old deficit and the enormous increase which a distant war, the compulsory creation of a marine, the armaments of the ports and the support of an army beyond the sea were about to entail.

Wishing to signalize his advent to power by a brilliant example of disinterestedness, Necker refused the fees for signatures, valued at three hundred thousand livres, and the usual perquisites amounting to the same sum ; he also declined all salary.†

The last statements exhibited to the king by Clugny showed a deficit of twenty-four millions in the ordinary expenses‡ and fifteen millions in the extraordinary of the marine. To these thirty-nine millions Necker

* Nougaret, Règne de Louis Seize, t. 5. p. 126, 128.

† The English Observer, vol. 6, p. 180, 181.

‡ Compte Rendu au Roi par M. Necker, directeur general des finances au mois de Janvier, 1781. Part 1. from the Royal Press.

added ten millions, representing a reserved fund which he thought a great empire should always possess to meet contingencies.

Such was then the state of affairs, and in other times a minister would have had three means of surmounting it; taxes, economy, loans.

But here Necker had no choice. Engaged in a war which had become inevitable since the first cannon was fired by an English vessel, Necker could not dream of carrying it on by taxes or economy.

Taxation? It would not have been sufficient for it. And besides what minister without bowels would have dared to demand its last obolus from the people, when cries of distress were arising from all quarters; when the groans of corveables driven by blows along the roads were resounding from one end of France to the other, and when despair had seized upon so many? Necker knew all this, he knew the crying iniquities of taxes, the vices of their assessment, their monstrous inequality; he knew them to be a calamity, which arrested, decimated population, and he did not wish to recur to so murderous a resource.

Economy? It was assuredly very desirable, very urgent; for those nobles, those princes of the church, who regarded it as disgraceful to contribute to the public charges, made it a point of honor to divide its product under a thousand forms. They devoured every thing; they shared as much as eighteen millions in pensions, an enormous sum,* said the minister of finances, and at least double what the sovereigns of all Europe united devoted to the pensions of their kingdoms. Unfortunately it was not easy to cut into the quick; the abuses had too deep roots.

Necker determined then to have resort to the system of loans, and in this he adopted the more democratic part; first because he spared the people a surcharge which might have crushed them, and then because the basis of loans being credit, to borrow was to seek his support in public confidence and public opinion.

But what was this new, this strange phrase, *public opinion*, which a minister for the first time sounded in the ears of an absolute monarch? Was that French people, who had been condemned to silence since the days of Louis the Fourteenth about to have a voice in the council? A formidable innovation, which drew puns from the old Maurepas, and whose bearing did not escape the penetrating glance of Vergennes. "France,† he said in a low tone to Louis the Sixteenth, is an absolute monarchy; if the *public opinion* of *Mister Necker* prevails, your majesty may expect to see those who obey command, and those who command, obey." In this consisted the greatness of the enterprises of Necker, and yet he did not believe in the overthrow of the monarchy. He only wished it mitigated, balanced by public opinion, reduced to an impotence to do injury. Less a Genevese than an Englishman, he did not rise to a republican conception. After having been in his writings the defender of the people, he was in power but the minister of burgherism. After

* *Compte rendu au Roi par M. Necker, directeur general des finances au mois de Janvier, 1781. Part 2. from the Royal Press, p. 27.*

† *Rapport confidentiel au roi, published by Soulevie in his Mémoires historiques sur le règne de Louis Seize, p. 208, 213.*

having thought with the boldness of a Rousseau, he dared not place his foot beyond the limits marked out by the moderation of Montesquieu.

His plans however were strongly connected with and breathed a love for the public good. Full of a pride which he sometimes permitted to descend to vanity, he had thus laid down his problem.

I will borrow if necessary five hundred millions in order to be prepared for circumstances; I will establish credit in France by the development of public opinion; in order to form this opinion I will rend the veil which conceals the situation of the finances from all eyes; through means of the provincial assemblies, a stepping stone to the convocation of the states general; I will call the nation to public business; I will obtain a reform in the impost, and when that, reformed, can be increased without barbarity, I will pay off the loans. Then the kingdom, enriched and victorious, will bless me for having saved it from bankruptcy and placed it in a situation to conquer. Public opinion, which shall have served me as an instrument, will ring with my renown.

It was so; the name alone of Necker inspired unlimited confidence from the first. The public funds rose in France, whilst by a contrast of which the new minister could boast, those of England declined. The bankers secretly flattered at seeing one of themselves at the head of the finances, did not wait the registry of the edict to cover the first loan of twenty-four millions. The doors of the royal treasury were, it is true, opened, and they affected to place guards at them, but the loan closed at the termination of the day, and the public could not obtain shares in it, without paying a premium to the bankers.* The loan resembled a lottery; a part was reimbursable by lot to some lenders, the rest was converted into life annuities. Two hundred millions were thus borrowed in two years with surprising facility. Credit, to the great astonishment of the financiers, developed itself precisely by the use that was made of it. Foreigners hastened to subscribe and took a third of the loans of Necker;† the gold of Europe flowed into the treasury of the king of France. Men's minds reassured, could then abandon themselves to the emotions which the news from the camp at Rhode Island produced, and at Versailles many gentlemen envied the wounds of La Fayette. From being interested in the battles of which American independence was to be the price, the people of France became habituated to a bias for liberty; and the more clear sighted, those especially who felt the revolution grumbling in the bottom of their hearts, were obliged to the finance minister for having found in credit the means of making this old royalist France march beneath the flags of the republican army.

But the success of Necker drew on him as many enemies as his reforms, and we may imagine to what a concert of curses a man was exposed whom they saw suppress the receivers of the domains, diminish the number of the farmers of the revenue and the sum of their outrageous profits, decimate the administration of the lottery, break the lease of the post, and place the farming of it under the government, lay a heavy hand on the intendants of the finances, a kind of unknown magistrates who

* Soulavie, *Memoires historiques et politiques du règne de Louis Seize*, t. 4. p. 51.

† Senac de Meilhan, *Du gouvernement, des mœurs et des conditions en France*, p. 168.

adjudged litigated matters in a sovereign manner in their cabinets, and then informed the ministers of their arbitrary decisions. He had also had the boldness to extend the impost of vingtièmes to the property of members of the parliament, and those great proprietors did not pardon him for having abased them to a level with the mobocracy. The high financiers were still more irritated, because a fund of jealousy was mingled with their resentment. What would become of their importance in the state, if he should take it into his head to cancel the leases, and to change the farmers general into mere administrators? Would not this be done after having ruined them? and the victims of the suppressions pursued him with invectives. They said he had reached his post by means of deep intrigues, and had been introduced into the between room, (*entre-sol*), from which Maurepas governed France, by a certain Marquis de Pezai, a mysterious correspondent of Louis the Sixteenth, and the maker of small verses in imitation of Dorat. One of them represented the *superb Necker*, enveloped in an overcoat, awaiting, in a coach house, the return of his mysterious protector.

More serious reproaches were mixed with these personal attacks. They accused the reforming minister, not without reason, of having given an immoral form to his loans by the life annuities; which was to encourage egotism, and as it were to invite the father of a family to devour the fortune of his children in advance. But his enemies went too far when they reproached him for not having laid taxes as a pledge to the lenders, and for not having established any sinking fund. Lenders, who are moreover in the eyes of a minister secondary to the state, are always sufficiently advised of the risks they have to run; and the proof that enough guarantees were then offered to them is, that they lent as much as five hundred and thirty millions, knowing well that Necker assured the interest of each of his loans by a reform, the advantage of which was that the treasury was not burthened by perpetual dividends, and that their natural sinking fund was found in the successive deaths of the annuitants.

It was certainly no novelty for a minister to be assailed by the curses of those whom he sacrificed to the public good; but what most surprises us is, that Necker had against him, both the men whose employments he reformed, and the writers who, like himself, had demanded those reforms. The economists attacked him without relaxation. The Abbé Baudeau, the bitter Condorcet, intolerant from conviction, were enraged at being unable to overwhelm him and multiplied angry pamphlets.* What they did not pardon him at the bottom was, his haughtiness towards the sect, and his having dared in his writings to question the absolute right of property. The chevalier Turgot, the brother of the old minister and Condorcet broke out loudly and furiously. "Unfortunate nation, exclaimed the former, thou wilt never wake from the evils which Necker has prepared for thee:" and he recalled with violent emotion the famous chapter which finishes the book on the *legislation and trade in grain*; "What are we to expect, he added, from a minister who is so embittered

against the class of proprietors, in favor of that which has nothing? We expect to see the scenes of the two Gracchi renewed in France.* They were some who mentioned the name of Law, thinking thus to insult Necker.

The director of the finances remained popular, notwithstanding those clamors; he had public opinion on his side, an unexpected judge before whom the monarchy was to appear. Was it not a prodigy to carry on the American war without taxes? *Without taxes*,† Necker had said, and this formulary which characterized the situation, was repeated throughout the kingdom, by a people astonished that victory cost them nothing. Besides the sentimental tone of the works of the Genevese, and the art with which he knew how to interest the imagination in the driest questions of finances, had conciliated for him the favor of the women, not only among the third estate, but at court, at Versailles, in the boudoir in which Marie Antoinette allowed the secret of her sympathies to escape in light words. The lofty Countess de Brionne, the Marchioness de Coigny, Madame de Simiane, the Princess de Beauvau, the imperious dutchess de Grammont, employed the seductions of grace or the empire of the heart for the benefit of Necker. Madame de Tessé, Madame de Blot, the Countess de Chalons expended their wit in maintaining the system of the loans, in propping the philosophical minister, who wished to make the administration of the finances at once "a train of thoughts,"‡ and a series of operations. They went about collecting the news, spreading official rumors, giving orders and pushing the patronage of their beauty into the ranks of public opinion. They pointed out the Marquis de Castries, delighted to have been made a minister by Necker, and the Duke de Choiseul, who hoped through him again to become one.

The same admiration was also manifested under a more serious aspect. Since the death of Madame Goeffin, the philosophers met at the house of Madame Necker; their hatred of the priests triumphed in the elevation of a protestant. And yet they were not ignorant that a part of the high clergy rallied round him. That the fierce Archbishop de Beaumont, so terrible to the Jansenists and the Convulsionists, was frequently seated, as a familiar friend, at the table of Necker, the Calvinist.§ The people of the country could only bless a minister, who instead of increasing taxation, aspired to diminish it, by reforming it. The enlightened part of the third estate, followed the financial innovations with an attentive eye, order introduced into the accountability by the concentration of the different strong boxes at the public treasury, the development of credit, the humane plans in favor of the poor, prisoners and mendicants. The Academician Thomas, and the Abbé Raynal opposed ardent apologies to the hostile pamphlets. Some appeared, in which it was thought, that the distinguished pen and susceptible character of Madame Necker shone out. The reproach levelled at the director of the finances of hav-

* *Mémoires historiques*, t. 4. p. 26.

† Nougaret, *Règne de Louis Seize*, t. 5. p. 254.

‡ Necker's own expression.

§ *Memories historiques et politiques*, t. 4. p. 731.

ing, by borrowing, solaced the present at the expense of future races was strongly repulsed. Are not the races united? Must our offspring not repose beneath the shade of the trees which their ancestors planted? If it were true that the American war was to be onerous to generations to come, were they to receive no benefits from it? And was that revolutionary idea, borne by the sea breeze from distant shores, nothing?

Love of popularity was the passion of Necker, his superstition almost; he pursued his plans.

It was some years since the Marquis of Mirabeau had said, "A nation not represented, is like a man deprived of speech; his arms only are left him to make known his wants."*

Fenelon wished for provincial assemblies, Turgot proposed them, Necker established them.

He handed a confidential memorial to the king, in which he criticised the administration of the intendants of the provinces bitterly. He painted them arrogant to the weak, timid before the strong, absent at pleasure, informed by chance, cutting the sovereign with an insolence which was only bounded by their ignorance. If their capacity was doubtful, their ambition on the other hand was not. By means of a striking injustice, they governed without contradiction, and the monarch was compelled to see before him those very persons, who should have been judged.† Thus was the work of Richelieu to perish. But, instituted for the purpose of mating the nobility, the intendants of the provinces had then exhausted their mission. Richelieu had created them for the advantage of royalty against the nobles; Necker wished to destroy them, for the advantage of the third estate, against the royalty.

Louis the Sixteenth yielded; he consented to establish, by way of trial, a provincial assembly in Berri, then reputed the most miserable province in France, and selected on that very account.‡

Twelve nobles, twelve members of the clergy, twenty-four proprietors of cities and the country, formed the forty-eight members of this provincial assembly. The king did not reserve to himself the right of election; he designated only sixteen members who were commissioned to choose the other thirty-two. It was determined they should vote by *heads* and not by *orders*. The assembly was to meet for a month every two years; and in the interim, a commission, headed by the archbishop, was charged to execute its decisions§ concerning the assessment and levy of taxes. Certainly such dispositions were very timidly received; too much respect was still shown in them for past things. But we have said Necker did not possess the force nor the courage of his intellect, and his boldness remained in his books. He, who had lately attacked social order by digging to its very roots, was carrying on a surface revolution. And yet

* See the *Memoire sur l'utilité des états provinciaux*, cited in the first volume of this work, and printed at the end of, *l'Ami des hommes*.

† *Mémoires sur les assemblées provinciales*, handed privately to the king by Necker. It was afterwards traitorously published by M. de Maurepas, and contributed much to the fall of the minister of the finances, by exciting the parliaments, which were roughly handled in this memorial, against him.

‡ *Essai sur les assemblées provinciales*, by the Baron de Girardot.

§ Decree of the 12th of July.

how to deny it? After the long saturnalia of absolute power, and when it was necessary to break that sinister power which evil frequently imbibes by its very duration, it was already much to aim silently to change a despotic monarchy into a mixed royalty. It might be foreseen, that the proprietors, invited to assess the taxes, would soon be desirous to vote them; that the nation consulted about the taxes, would aspire to give its advice about other matters. This word *trial* was assuredly very modest; but finally it contained a promise—it was an opening for a future.

And in fact, the provincial assembly of Berri was like the shadow which points out on a wall the arrival of the expected object. A national council, inevitable and approaching, was in some sort announced; it afforded the model of the States General on a small scale.

The attempt here was the more seductive and fruitful, since none of those terrible questions out of which the first tempest was to spring, could be agitated here; the double representation of the third estate, deliberation in common, vote by heads. The labors commenced; they were accomplished in the midst of a profound calm; and the provincial assembly of Berri and that of Upper Guienne, held soon afterwards at Montauban, under the presidency of the Bishop of Rodez, marked their passage by useful efforts.

In Berri five hundred and seventeen parishes were commanded each year for the *corvée*. These furnished, for eight days, forty thousand workmen, and twelve thousand vehicles, with twenty-four thousand horses or oxen, which raised the numbers of days for laborers to three hundred and twenty thousand, and the sum of the vehicles to ninety-six thousand. These days, estimated at fifteen sols for the men and four livres for the vehicles, imposed on the corveables a charge of six hundred and eighty thousand livres. The assembly determined that not more than six leagues of new roads should be constructed annually, and judging that this could be done for two hundred and forty thousand livres, it suppressed the *corvée* in kind, and replaced it by a contribution in money which reached almost all classes, the people directly, however, and the clergy and nobles in the persons of their farmers.*

Thus the people were warned of the advantage of a representative régime, and every amelioration voted in the provincial assemblies pushed the nation along the path of the States General.

During this time, Necker was sustaining the burthen of the war without being overwhelmed by it, so great was the confidence of the lenders who furnished him resources. He lived† only to achieve the reforms commenced, and meditate new ones. Now, in renewing the lease of the general letting, he saved fourteen millions; now, he procured for the state some advantage in the *taille* or in the taxations of the treasurers by uniting different departments in the royal treasury; now, finally, he sold their lands to the hospitals, and offered them investments at twenty years purchase, without disturbing himself about the anger he excited; and the good will of Louis the Sixteenth assisting him, he carried a lamp

* Necker, *administration des finances de France*, t. 2. p. 229, et suiv.

† *Compte rendu de Necker*, p. 6.

into the most obscure expenses of the king's household, and the office of the steward thereof. A degrading, immense disorder reigned there. A number of the officers were at once furnishers, providers and guests; so well did they know how to make the king pay for the provisions they themselves consumed. Behind a master of the pantry would be met some great lord who had sold him his place, and who defended to the last what he dared to call a patrimony. Every abuse had its proprietor. Necker reduced the expenses one half, suppressed the office of grand master of the king's household, those of comptrollers general, treasurers of the mouth, of the plate, of the privy purse, of the stables, and the queen's household.

And what a treasury of scandals did the chapter of pensions produce. The single family of Noailles touched a million, seven hundred and fifty thousand livres. There was a member of the Polignac family, who had eighty thousand, simply because the queen loved the Countess Jules. An old president received three pensions, amounting to eighty thousand seven hundred livres, and all based on his functions as president, as was afterwards discovered.* A pension of twenty-five thousand livres had been granted to a lady to facilitate her marriage. A head dresser was pensioned, as having dressed the head of a daughter of the Count d'Artois, who died at three years of age, before she had hair.

It was, it must be admitted, with a trembling hand that Necker stirred so many abuses, many of which had not yet been exposed. He would have wished to resume the mortgaged domains; but alarmed by the power of the families he would have had to brave, he hesitated, he recoiled. Millions upon millions were, however, disappearing in the gulph of the war; immediate resources were indispensable; the provincial assemblies, reduced to two, offered an insufficient assistance: Necker determined to seize strongly on public opinion. We are arriving at *the statement*.

To render his accounts no more to the king alone, but to the French people; no more to wash himself from a suspicion, as formerly the comptrollers general Des Marets and Lepelletier had done, but to constitute solemnly a popular tribunal before which he might say, "the minister of the king, I am but the servant of the nation" . . . was certainly a grand and imposing novelty. The monarchy disappeared, for a moment at least; there only remained upon the scene, a minister before the people.

The resolution taken, the problems presented themselves; to know the situation and to tell it.

To know it correctly was difficult, to tell it frankly was dangerous. Having had an expensive war to sustain, Necker had been able by means of economy and skill, to compete with circumstances, but not to surpass and conquer them. It was unlikely that he should have heaped up during the war, a deficit stated during the peace. What he wanted was to dazzle public opinion; but he could not produce triumphant figures, without coasting by the side of a falsehood, if we may so speak. A culpable resource, and of which the gravity of the situation did not

* Livre rouge.

justify the employment. When one dares to have recourse to the dangerous maxim, "the end justifies the means," it is at least necessary that it should be in one of those formidable positions in which the statesman proves the disinterestedness of his views by the greatness of his danger, and in which he carries his head as if it were at stake.

Armed with a paradox, Necker maintained that there were two modes of rendering an account of the finances ;

"The one, he said, which was preferable at first glance, consisted in exposing the universality of the receipts and also of the expenses.

"The other, which was more simple, more evident, consisted in making up the chapter of the revenues only from the payments made into the royal treasury by the different departments, a deduction being made of the charges which these departments were bound to pay, and by carrying to the column of expenses, only the payments made by this same royal treasury."

This proposition contained a very subtle error. It was not true that those two accounts could have balanced. The first was an account of *revenue*, the second of the *cash*.*

Brought up to accounts from his youth, Necker was aware of that distinction. He knew that the balance of an account is susceptible of variation at the will of him who disposes of the cash ; that the *excess of the receipts* may be increased by adjourning certain expenses, whilst that of the *revenue* cannot be.

As the position must arise from a comparison of the receipts and expenses of the royal treasury, the skilful financier reserved to himself the means of stopping at the point he wished. Were the excess of the reserve too small, he had but to carry to an outside department a payment until then reserved for the royal treasury. Were the excess too great, he annulled a charge upon a department, carried it to the treasury, and the balance was charged.

The *statement* (*compte rendu*) was drawn up on this basis. It exhibited

in revenue,	.	.	.	.	.	264,154,000 livres.
in expenses,	.	.	.	.	.	253,954,000 do.

and consequently an excess of 10,200,000 do.

A surprising result, which astonished alike the friends and enemies of the minister. What ! Necker on entering the ministry, had found by his own avowal, a deficiency of thirty-nine millions ; he had had to prepare for the war and sustain it for three years ; he had created no tax ; his economies and reforms were not to be compared with the enormous charges which he had to meet. . . And yet this deficit of thirty-nine millions was converted by magic into an excess of ten millions. All minds were confounded.

* A private person has, for example, a revenue of six thousand francs, and expenses to the amount of five thousand. His excess of revenue is then a thousand francs. We suppose that one year he instructs his farmers to pay four thousand for him to his purveyors, and to pay over the rest to him. He will find himself in possession of an excess of receipts of two thousand francs, that is double his excess of revenue. We cannot then judge of his fortune by the state of his purse, at least until he has paid all his expenses.

The language of *the statement* took moreover an imposing tone. Necker blamed the monarchy in it, for having until now made a mystery of the condition of the finances. He denounced the falsehood of the ancient edicts, making sport of the preambles, *which were too often alike to be always true*. After having gravely drawn a picture of his reforms, he spoke of them, now with complaisance, now with a modesty which appeared to be but the politeness of his pride. The order which he had introduced into the business of the treasury, and which reigned in his works, he placed in his exposition, a kind of elementary and luminous treatise, evidently intended to commence the public education in matters of government. The profits of finance, pensions, domains, forests, the expenses of the king's household, taxes, corvées, the trade in grains, weights and measures, the coin, pawnbrokeries, prisons, hospitals, were all passed in review; and after having designated the numberless abuses which he had reformed, he called public attention to the asylums from which it too frequently turned aside, to the situation of foundlings, the indigent, the wan population of the hospitals, to all the unfortunate. Morality thus mingling with his calculations, his figures became eloquent and pathetic. It was not difficult for him to awaken the compassion of the French, when he showed them the frightful sight of the hospitals, in which several dying-men were extended on the same bed,* and the sight, no less frightful, of those prisons or of criminals tormented at pleasure by savage moralists, who had no longer any thing human about them but their misfortune. The last thought of *the statement* was a personal one, but as honorable as it was lofty. "I have not sacrificed," said Necker at the close, "neither to credit nor to power. I have renounced the most delightful of private satisfactions, that of serving my friends, or of obtaining gratitude from those who surround me. If any one owes a pension, a place, or an employment merely to my favor, let him speak."

The statement was not a book only, it was an act. It produced a profound sensation. Six thousand copies were sold on the day it appeared,† and the labor of two presses did not supply the demand which arrived from the provinces and from foreign countries. At London, the partisans of peace laid it on the table of parliament, and said they could not continue the war with a kingdom so prosperous, so well administered as France.

The friends of Necker took fire, and his enemies were disconcerted by the universal enthusiasm. They exhausted the formularies of eulogy in prose and verse. The nation, proud of its importance being at last recognized, devoured the pages already translated into all the languages of Europe. It resembled a vigorous and intelligent young man, who, newly emancipated, receives the accounts of his guardian. The genius of England, impressed on the *statement*, was saluted by the third estate, which was overflowing with the reading of Montesquieu. Engravings, that press of the poor and illiterate, were multiplied in honor of Necker, in which the allegory spoke loudly. The people formed themselves in

* See the edict of the 11th of May and the *compte-rendu*.

† Correspondance de Grimm, t. 10. p. 402. February, 1781.

groups along the Seine, around those works made up to act upon the public opinion which had inspired them.*

The party of Necker was the strongest at Versailles, because it was the most active. Never had a matter of fashion or dress, never had a question of elegance been privileged to excite the great ladies of the court, and especially those of the queen's circle, to such a pitch. They read, they praised the *statement*, full as it was of government and politics, which preached the sad doctrine of economy, and taught France book-keeping. Maurepas took no pains to brave so strong an approval, except by puns. Seeing that it was bound in a blue cover, he called it the *blue account*; and the word was repeated complacently by the old court, the economists moderately touched that Necker was of their opinion on several points, and by many of the nobles who lived on the miserable industry of the pensions. What did this unusual noise mean? The fanatics of abuses denied the right of existence to public opinion. But Necker, who felt himself sustained, was at first firm, then intolerant and irritable. He talked of 'sending to the Bastille, writers who dared to decry a book by which England was moved, and from which peace was to spring. "To attack the *statement*, he exclaimed indignantly, is to commit a state crime, is to burn the Brest fleet."†

A fall is frequently enveloped in a triumph. Maurepas took umbrage at an 'ascendancy, which appeared to him to be an usurpation of his proper influence. Two ministers, Sartines and Montbarrey, had been already replaced without his advice, and despite of him; he recollected with bitterness, that whilst a fit of the gout had detained him at Paris, his colleague, admitted alone to the king, had carried the appointment of M. de Castries, as minister of war; he avenged himself. Necker had placed confidentially in the king's hands a memorial concerning provincial assemblies, in which the parliaments were not spared; Maurepas with a well calculated indiscretion, produced the piece, and its author was attacked. Wounded then to the bottom of his soul, the director of the finances desired that a brilliant step should testify loudly to his credit. Not content with seeing the Princess de Poix, the Noailles, the Dutchess de Polignac, the friends of Marie Antoinette range themselves around him, he determined to engage the king in his quarrel, he demanded the title of Minister of State and a seat in the council, from which his quality as a protestant had kept him. He offered his resignation in case of refusal. Maurepas advised that he should be admitted to the council *if he solemnly abjured the errors of Calvin*.‡ He knew him to be incapable of such baseness. The king then received his resignation as minister of the finances on the 19th of May. It was written on a small sheet of paper, without direction or address, and the form of it appeared so insolent to Louis the Sixteenth, that he swore solemnly never again to employ him.§

The news of a disgrace so little expected, was received with deep

* No less than sixty-six engravings, of which eighteen had reference to the *comptendu*, appeared.

† Montryon, *Particularites sur les ministres de finances*.

‡ Sur l'administration de M. Necker, by himself.

§ Response du roi au memoire de M. Castries en faveur de M. Necker.

anger. The nation thought itself offended. The promenades, the cafés, and the streets were crowded; but an extraordinary silence reigned every where.* Bourboulon, the author of *Remarks on the Statement*, having been perceived in the Palais Royal, the populace pursued him with threats. Necker went to reside at his country seat of Saint Ouen near Paris; a long file of carriages followed him there. They belonged to those who hastened to pay their compliments to him. The archbishop of Paris set the example, and the Duke of Orleans, the Duke de Chartres, the Richelieus, the Luxembourgs, the Duke de Choiseul, the Prince de Condé, were remarked among the visitors. The times were long past, when Louis the Fourteenth could, by a frown, condemn a minister to the isolation of universal disgrace.

Such was the first administration of Necker. It was at once, for him and those, who, judging the revolution inevitable, dreaded it, and for those who wished it, powerful, prolonged, decisive. The former applauded in his person the man who appeared to be the most capable of preventing the excess of popular passion, by opening some issuer for liberty. The latter encouraged him to begin the career, well determined, if he refused to advance, to leave him on the road.

Necker himself did not certainly foresee that the revolution would pass him at a bound.

CHAPTER III.

THE MYSTICAL REVOLUTIONISTS.

The Mystical Revolutionists—The gold coiners of the Faubourg Saint Marceau—Historical importance of Free Masonry—Institution of the high grades; their revolutionary action—Philip of Orleans the head of the Free Masons—Conspiracy of the *Illuminati*; plan of Weishaupt; reception to the grade of a priest of the Illuminati; deep propagandism—Part assigned to Cagliostro; Cagliostro at Paris; scenes in the Rue Sainte Claude—The *TERNARY* of Saint Martin; birth and progress of the sect of the *Martinists*—Mesmer; his system, the counterproof of the doctrine of Saint Martin; Mesmerism triumphant; the Princess de Lambelle and Marie Antoinette at the *bucket* of d'Eslon—Attraction of minds towards mysticism—Lavater denounced by Mirabeau—Reactionary movement against the philosophy of Voltaire and the Encyclopedists—The second revolution prepared in the secret societies—The dinner of Cazotte.

Moved by invincible desires, agitated by a thousand confused hopes, France had for some time assumed a strange aspect. Below those exposed regions in which the queen was giving herself up to her pleasures, the Count de Provence to his plots and Necker to his calculations, a crowd of ardent spirits were trying the ways of chance. It was no longer enough to judge priests and abase kings; they wished to remake the people; they wished to temper morals from new sources; they dedicated the future to an unknown god. In their enthusiasm, at once

* Correspondance de Grimm, t. 10. p. 434. Edit. Furne.

simple and sombre, some demanded that it should at last be given to man to raise the veil which was drawn over the origin and the end of worlds, and why a being, endowed with the triple power of loving, meditating and wishing, should not end by seizing on the hidden forces of nature, surprising the secret of life, conquering death. No, never had human thought lost itself in such depths, never had it created for itself such fantastic kingdoms. When, in 1740, in that France which the good sense of Voltaire was about to illuminate, the Count de Saint Germain had said, "I am several centuries old; I lived in intimacy with Francis the First; I knew Jesus Christ," they contented themselves with a smile. A natural son of the king of Portugal, according to some, the offspring of a Jew and a Polish princess according to others, the Count de Saint Germain owed his first curious success to the very skepticism whose empire he braved with such original hardihood. Madame de Pompadour had loved him from caprice, Louis the Fifteenth from ennui, the Duke de Choiseul for his affectation of skill, allowing him to believe that he employed him as a diplomatic spy. The time had come in which mysticism obtained more than a dangerous or sneering patron; and that time, remarkable thing, was that which preceded the greatest, the most terrible of realities, the revolution.

It was because the philosophers of the eighteenth century had abused the analysis; they had sacrificed feeling too much to reason, the happiness of belief to the pride of knowledge. When it watches in the silence of the other faculties, the intellect soon becomes fatigued and alarmed; it comes to doubt of every thing, to doubt of itself, and it becomes necessary for it to forget itself in the bosom of happy intoxication. That intoxication of the intellect is the imagination. Faith is the repose of thought, and the repose would not differ from death, if it did not sleep in a bed full of dreams.

A reactionary movement was then inevitable after Voltaire. Disconcerted for a short time, but untamed, the necessity for belief reappeared under strange forms. The old belief once dead, gave place in restless and impassioned souls to ecstatic bursts, to aspirations which braved impossibility, and which sought for an end in the most remote country of reveries. And as every thing is for the advantage of those great events which mark the passage of God across history, the mystics labored with no less ardor than the skeptics in the work of the revolution.

Rumors which agitated them in different ways, then began to spread among the people. They spoke of persons bound together by formidable oaths, and given up entirely to dark designs. They said they were the possessors of secrets which procured treasures, and a magic power was attributed to them. The rumor was soon spread and believed, that unknown chemists had established themselves in the faubourg Saint Marceau. In laboratories, which watchful care concealed from persecution, men, with a piercing glance, an unintelligible language and soiled garments, were actively engaged in producing gold, rendering mercury stable, doubling the size of diamonds, or in compounding elixirs. These singular workmen remained voluntary prisoners in their faubourg; they inhabited obscure dwellings, and did not appear to be in any way asso-

ciated in the enjoyment of the wealth of which they were reputed to be creators."* But they had leaders who were sought after in the world, and displayed themselves in it with grace, generosity and a dazzling opulence. One of them whose domains, nor deeds, nor dividends, nor family, no one knew, led the life of a sovereign, and expended more in benevolence than princes did in shows and festivals.†

Among the number of contradictory suppositions, the vulgar thought, "These are supernatural beings, we must respect and fear them, for their knowledge comes from angels or devils; nature obeys them, and there is nothing equal to their power." Others regarded them only as impostors, to whom the imbecility of the public alone gave genius, virtue and fortune. Others finally regarded them as sectaries who had sworn the ruin of all tyrannies; if they affected to live plunged in the study of the occult sciences, it was to escape supervision and deceive the disquietude of governments; if they pursued their career surrounded by mystery, it was to rule the credulous crowd the better, by the attraction of the marvellous; their chiefs were the apostles of the revolution, and the gold, which served to open the paths of propagandism,—that gold which they pretended was melted in magic crucibles, came from a central purse supplied by secret and systematic subscriptions, the subscriptions of the conspirators.

In the meanwhile, a man reached Paris, who was already surrounded by a strange celebrity. This man united all advantages; much dignity of appearance, an expressive figure, with a mixture of mildness, a profound look, a mouth on which disdain was tempered by something affectionate and tender. There was nothing about him, which was not strange. Where was his birth-place? What his family? Where and how had he acquired the knowledge with which he appeared to be endowed, and his wealth, which he expended magnificently? He called himself the Count de Cagliostro; was that his true name? His age even was uncertain, many lending to him, beneath the appearance of youth, the experience of a long life. It was said he had at last found the philosopher's stone; that he knew the future; that he had dealings with heavenly spirits. At Bale, being introduced to Lavater, he had left an indefinable impression of distrust and admiration on him. "He is a surprising man," wrote the minister of the holy Gospel at Zurich, the good and pious Lavater, in speaking of Cagliostro. "Yet I do not believe in this man. Oh, if he were humble as a child, if he only stooped for the simplicity of the gospel, for the dignity of our Lord, who would be greater than he."‡

We will soon tell what motives brought Cagliostro to Paris, and what part had been assigned to him. But we must first introduce the reader into the mine, which revolutionists very differently profound, and more active than the encyclopedists, were then digging beneath altars and thrones.

An association composed of men of every country, religion and rank, bound together by symbolical conventions, pledged by an oath to guard inviolably the secret of their internal existence, submitted to lugubrious

* *Memoires pour servir à l'histoire du Comte de Cagliostro.* Note 3. Hamburg, 1786.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Lettre du Comte de Mirabeau à M— sur Cagliostro et Lavater, p. 48. Berlin, 1786.*

proofs, occupying themselves with fantastic ceremonies, but practising benevolence, and regarding each other as equals, though divided into three classes, *apprentices, companions and masters*, in which free-masonry consists, a mystical institution which some derive from the old initiations of Egypt, and others deduce from a fraternity of architects already formed in the third century.

On the eve of the French revolution, free-masonry was found to have taken an immense development. Spread through all Europe, it seconded the meditative genius of Germany, agitated France deeply, and presented every where the image of a society founded on principles, contrary to those of the civil society.

In the masonic lodges, the pretensions of hereditary pride were proscribed, and the privileges of birth set aside. When the profane who wished to be initiated, entered the room called the *cabinet of reflection*, he read upon the walls, which were hung with black, and covered with funeral emblems, this characteristic inscription, "If thou regardest human distinctions, go forth; they are unknown here."* The recipiendary learned from the address of the officer, that the aid of free-masonry was to efface distinctions of color, rank and country; to annihilate fanaticism, and extirpate national hatreds;† and this it was, that they expressed by the allegory of an immaterial temple reared by the great Architect of the universe, by the sages of different climates, an august temple whose columns, symbols of force and wisdom were crowned by the *pomegranates of friendship*.‡ To believe in God, was the only religious duty exacted from the recipiendary. Thus, there was above the throne of the president of each lodge or *venerable*, a delta radiating from the centre, in which the name of *Jehovah*§ was written in Hebrew characters.

Thus, by the single fact of the constitutive bases of its existence, free-masonry tended to decry the institutions and ideas of the external world which enveloped it. It is true that the masonic instructions inculcated submission to the laws, observance of the forms and usages admitted by society without, respect to sovereigns. It is even true, that met at table, masons drank to kings in monarchical states, and to the chief magistrate in republics. But such reserves, commanded to the prudence of an association which threatened jealous governments so much, were not sufficient to annul the naturally revolutionary, though in general, pacific influences of free-masonry. Those who composed it, still continued to be, in *profane society*, rich or poor, nobles or plebeians; but within the lodges, temples open to the practices of a superior life, rich and poor, nobles and plebeians, were recognized as equals, and called each other brethren. It was an indirect, but real and continuous denunciation of the iniquities and miseries of the social order; it was a propaganda in action, a living sermon.

On the other hand, darkness, mystery, an oath terrible to pronounce, a secret to learn at the price of many sinister proofs courageously submit-

* Clavel, *Hist. pittoresque de la Franc-Maçonnerie*, part 1st. Introduction, p. 3. Pagnerre, 1844. † Ibid. p. 23.

‡ Ragon, *Corres. interpretatif des initiations anciennes et modernes*. Introduction, p. 18. edit. sacrée, 5842.

§ Clavel, *Hist. pittoresque de la Franc-Maçonnerie*, p. 24.

ted to, a secret to keep under penalty of being devoted to execration and death, private signs by which the brethren recognized each other every where, ceremonies having reference to the history of a murder, and appearing to cover ideas of vengeance, what was more suitable to form conspirators? And how could such an institution, at the approach of a crisis wished for by society in labor, not have furnished arms to the calculated audacity of the sectaries, to the judges of prudent liberty?

It is known upon what an allegorical recital, as on a sacred basis, all free-masonry reposes.*

Adoniram had been commissioned by Solomon to superintend the construction of the temple at Jerusalem. The workmen were three thousand in number. Adoniram divided them into three classes, apprentices, companions and masters, so as not to confound them in the payment of wages. They distinguished and recognized one another by words, signs and touches, which were to remain secret. Three companions, wishing to obtain the pass word of the master, resolved to wrest the revelation of it from Adoniram, or to assassinate him. They conceal themselves in the temple, and post themselves at different doors. Adoniram, having presented himself at the southern door, the first companion demands the *pass word of the master* from him, and, on his refusal to give it, strikes him violently over the head with the rule, with which he was armed. Adoniram flies to the western gate where the second companion strikes him on the heart, with a blow of the square. Collecting his strength, he endeavors to save himself by the eastern gate; but the third companion stops him, and, unable to obtain the word from him, stretches him dead by a blow of his mallet. Night having come, the assassins took the body, and interred it on Mount Libanus, where it was found by nine masters whom Solomon had sent to search for it. The tomb, over which an acacia grew, having been dug into, and those who touched the dead body, having exclaimed *Mac benac*, "the flesh leaves the bones," it was agreed that this phrase should be substituted hereafter for the lost one.

Such is the strange story, which, in free-masonry, recalls and figures a reception to the grade of master, a ceremony which took place around a sarcophagus, by the light of a dark lantern formed of a death's head, in a hall in which skeletons are embroidered in white on black hangings.

Then, when the society was impatient beneath the hand of violent power, but saw itself compelled to conceal its anger, how many resources of practices of this kind were not managed with caution by the artisans of plots? For who was this martyr who was to be avenged? And what that holy word to be reconquered?

When the Jacobites, driven from their kingdom by the revolution of 1688, sought an asylum in France,† whither they carried the rules of free-masonry, they had not failed to interpret the symbols, in accordance with their passions and their hopes. In several of the lodges for which Lord Dervenwater furnished us a model, in the chapter of the *Scotch Jacobite*,

* See les Mémoires pour Servir à l'histoire du Jacobinisme, by the abbé Barruel, t. 2. chap. 10, p. 203.—Clavel, Hist. pittoresque de la Franc Maçonnerie, p. 50 et suiv.—Le Testament de Cagliostro, p. 25 et 26, Paris, 1791.

† Robinson, Proofs of Conspiracies against all religions and all governments. London, 1799.

which Charles Edward Stuart himself founded at Arras, under the presidency of the father of Robespierre,* Adoniram was Charles the First; Cromwell and his followers represented the assassins of the martyr architect; the lost word was, *royalty*.

But the essential data of free-masonry were too democratic to lend themselves for any time to the intrigues of the pretender. The frame of the institution enlarging itself, democracy hastened to take a place in it; and by the side of many brethren, whose pride masonic life served but to charm, or to occupy their leisure, or give play to their benevolence, were those who cherished active thoughts, those whom the spirit of revolutions agitated.

The symbols bent to the most different interpretations; some were not long in affirming that free-masonry continued the so tragically celebrated order of the Templars; and in this system Adoniram was Jacques Molay; the murderers, Philip the Handsome, the personification of political tyranny, Clement the Fifth, the personification of religious tyranny and the judges whom they had transformed into executioners; the lost word was, *liberty*.

Innovations of a formidable character were soon introduced. As the three grades of ordinary masonry comprised a large body of men, opposed from their situation and principles to every plan of social subversion, the innovators multiplied the steps of the mystic ladder which was to be climbed; they created rear lodges reserved for ardent souls; they instituted the high grades of the *elect*, the *knight of the sun*, of *strict observance*, of *kadosh*, or the regenerated man, dark sanctuaries, whose doors were opened to the adept only after a long series of proofs, so calculated as to show the progress of his revolutionary education, prove the constancy of his faith, essay the temper of his heart. There, in the midst of a crowd of practices, now puerile, now sinister, was nothing which had not reference to ideas of enfranchisement and equality.

In the degree of *knight of the sun*, for example, when a reception took place, the *very venerable* began by asking the *first warden*, "What o'clock is it?" and the latter must reply, "The hour of obscurity among men." Interrogated in his turn as to the motives which led him there, the recipiendary replied, "I come to seek the light, for my companions and myself have strayed through the night which covers the world. Clouds obscure *Hesperus*, the star of Europe. They are formed by the incense which superstition offers to despots."[†]

The seventh grade of high masonry, that of the *knight of the sword*, and of the *rosy cross*, gave place to scenes no less characteristic. The forms and allegories of this grade were borrowed from what history relates of the captivity of the Jews at Babylon, of the destruction of their temple, and of the permission to rebuild it, granted by Cyrus to Zerubbabel.‡ Clothed in red, wearing a Scotch apron, laden with chains, the recipiendary, under the name of Zerubbabel, was conducted to the

* Ragon, Corres. preparatif, p. 74.

† Robinson, Proofs of a Conspiracy, etc. t. 1. p. 47.

‡ Testament de Cagliostro, p. 36 et 37.—The true Rosy Cross, 1774.

throne of Cyrus, in an apartment hung with green, and which seventy torches lighted, in commemoration of the seventy years of the Jewish captivity. "Who are you?" asked Cyrus. "The first of my equals; a mason by rank, a captive by disgrace.—Your name? Zerubbabel.—Your age? Seventy years.—What brings you here? The tears and misery of my brethren.—Tell me the secrets of masonry; that is the price of your liberty. When Solomon gave us the principles of masonry, he taught us that equality was to be our chief law. It does not exist here. Your rank, your titles, your ostentatious superiority, your court, all this is incompatible with the mysteries of our order, . . . but I have taken inviolable pledges. If I must violate them to become free, I prefer remaining a captive." The sovereign then struck seven blows, and after having congratulated the recipient on his virtue, his discretion and his firmness, ordered his chains to be taken off him. He then armed him with a sword, saying to him, "Be recognized chief over your equals;" and he then announced to the brethren that the sleep of the people was ended, and that the day of common deliverance was about to arise.

It was to those subterranean schools in which such instruction was given, that Condorcet alluded, when announcing that history of the progress of the human mind which his death interrupted, he promised to tell what blows monarchical idolatry and superstition had received from secret societies, the daughters of the order of the templars.

We must not be astonished, then, if the free-masons inspired a vague tenor in the more suspicious governments; they were anathematized at Rome by Clement the Seventh, pursued in Spain by the inquisition, persecuted at Naples; so in France, the Sorbonne declared them *worthy of eternal punishments*. And yet, thanks to the skilful mechanism of the institution, free-masonry found more protectors than enemies in princes and nobles. It pleased sovereigns, the great Frederick, to take the trowel, and gird himself with the apron. Why not? The existence of the high grades being carefully concealed from them, they only knew such parts of it as could be shown them without danger, and they saw nothing to be uneasy about, kept as they were in the lower grades, into which the depths of the doctrine only pierced confusedly through allegory, and in which many saw but occasions for diversions, but joyous banquets, but principles laid aside and resumed at the door of the lodges, but forms inapplicable to ordinary life, in a word, but a farce of equality. But in these matters the farce touches the drama; and it happened through a just and remarkable dispensation of Providence, that the proudest despisers of the people were led to cover with their name, and to serve blindly with their influence, latent enterprises directed against themselves.

Among the princes of whom we speak, there was one, however, towards whom discretion was not necessary. It was the Duke de Chartres, the future friend of Danton, that Philippe Egalité, so celebrated in the pageantry of the revolution, by which he became suspected, and which put him to death. Though still young, and abandoned to pleasure, he felt already within himself that spirit of opposition which is sometimes the virtue of younger branches, frequently their crime, always their moving

spring and torment. Free-masonry attracted him. It gave him power to exercise without effort; it promised to lead him along sheltered paths to the sway of the forum; it prepared for him a throne, less in view, but also less vulgar and less exposed than that of Louis the Sixteenth; finally, by the side of a known kingdom, in which fortune had placed his house upon the second platform, an empire was formed for him, peopled with voluntary subjects, and guarded by pensive soldiers. He accepted the grand mastership as soon as it was offered to him; and in the following year (1772) the free-masonry of France, so long a prey to anarchical rivalries, will find itself beneath a central and regular direction, which hastened to destroy the irrevocableness of the venerables, constituted the order upon an entirely democratic basis, and took the name of the *Grand Orient*.^{*} There was the central point of the general correspondence of the lodges; there met and resided the deputies from the cities which the hidden movement embraced; from thence went the instructions whose sense a special cypher or an enigmatical meaning did not permit hostile looks to penetrate.

From that time free-masonry opened itself, day by day, to most of the men whom we shall find in the revolutionary *melée*. Garat, Brissot, Bailey, Camille Desmoulins, Condorcet, Chamfort, Danton, dom Gerle, Rabaut-Saint-Etienne, Petion, came in succession to group themselves in the lodge of the *Nine Sisters*. Fauchet, Goupil de Prefeln, and Bonneville ruled in the lodge of the *Iron Mouth*. Sieyes founded the club of *Twenty-two* in the Palais Royal. The lodge of *Candor* became, when the Revolution matured, the rendezvous of the partisans of Philip of Orleans; Laclos, La Touche, Sillery, and among them were met Custine, the two Lameths, La Fayette.[†]

But free-masonry, as we have seen, had not an homogeneous character. The three first grades admitted all kinds of opinions; beyond that the diversity of the rites answered to that of the systems; and as we might judge by the names of Sieyes, Condorcet and Brissot, the philosophy of encyclopedists, and the tendencies of burgherism, occupied a large place in the lodges. It is this which struck Weishaupt, the professor of canon law in the University of Ingolstadt, one of the most profound conspirators who has ever lived. He then set himself to meditate upon new combinations.

By the sole attraction of mystery, by the sole power of association, to submit to one will and animate with the same breath, thousands of men in every country of the globe, but first in Germany and France; to make entirely new beings of these men by a slow and gradual education; to render them obedient to madness, to death, to invisible and unknown leaders; to weigh secretly, with such a legion, upon courts, to envelope sovereigns, to direct governments at their pleasure, and to lead Europe to that point, that every superstition should be annihilated, every monarchy abated, every privilege of birth declared unjust, the very rights of property abolished, and the equality of the first Christians proclaimed. Such was the gigantic plan of the founder of the ILLUMINATI.

^{*} Ragon, *Corres. interpretatif*, p. 73 et 74.

[†] Barruel, *Memoires pour servir à l'Histoire du Jacobinisme*, t. 5, p. 85.

It was to self-impose terrible necessities. Must they not employ proceedings worthy of the end? Must they not descend from prudence to artifice, from vigilance to espionage? Weishaupt perceived it, and did not hesitate. Brought up by the Jesuits, he hoped to combat and conquer them with their own arms. His principle was, that to obtain noble results, the good must have recourse to the means which the bad use, to obtain an injurious control.* He did human nature the injury to believe that it could only be freed by deceiving it; and being wanting in respect for truth, whose triumph he pursued, he placed ruse among his chances of success. "Every secret engagement," he said, "is a source of enthusiasm. It is useless to seek for its causes; the fact exists; that is enough;"† and he demanded his closest resources from mysticism.

The circumstances moreover were favorable for the adoption of hidden practices. The minds of men had for some time been occupied in Germany only with strange things. A curate named Gassner, who exorcised those possessed with the devil and cured the sick by simple formularies, counted almost a million of adherents‡ in Catholic Germany. At Leipzig an immense crowd had been seen to go one day to the public square on which the ghost of the magician Schœpfer,§ who died in 1774, was to appear at a given moment; and interpretations of the apocalypœ were published. The queen of Prussia and her women maintained that they had seen the *white lady*, who always appeared, the people said, whenever a member of the royal family was about to die.|| The disposition to the marvellous was general and lively.

Weishaupt was scarcely twenty-eight years of age when he laid the basis of illuminism. Those who were first admitted to his confidence, called themselves *Areopagites*. It was arranged that Weishaupt, known by the *Areopagites* alone, should be the invisible and all powerful chief of the sect; that it should be divided into two classes; that of *PREPARATIONS*, comprising the grades of *novice*, *minerval*, *illuminated minor* and *illuminated major*, and that of the *MYSTERIES*, consisting of the grades of *priest*, *regent*, *philosopher* and *man king*.¶ These divisions and subdivisions had for their object, first to measure the importance of the adept by his progress in the science of equality, and then to exalt his imagination by inducing him to hope for the communication of a precious secret as soon as he should have attained to the superior grades. It was determined that the illuminati of the high classes should apply themselves to the profound study of all the sciences, should exercise themselves in the art of explaining cyphers, of taking off the imprints of seals,** and should seek only employments which would subserve the interests of the order. They spoke of establishing a school of *minervales*,††

* Robinson, *Proof of a Conspiracy*, etc. vol. 1. p. 144.

† Exposure of the plan of Weishaupt, in a collection of papers discovered at Lands-hut and at the Castle of Sandersdorf, in 1786 and 1787, published by order of the Elector of Bavaria.

‡ Lettre du Comte de Mirabeau à M—— sur Cagliostro et Lavater, p. 73. Berlin, 1786.

§ Ibid.

|| Luchet, *Essai sur le sect des illuminés*, Note 14, Paris, 1789.

¶ Ecrits originaux dans les *Memoires pour servir à l'histoire du Jacobinisme*, t. 3. p. 23.

** Mounier, de l'influence aux philosophes, aux Franc Maçons et aux illuminés sur la Revolution de France, p. 181.

†† Lettre de Minos à Sébastien, 1782.

so as to draw women among them, who are usually so liable to impressions, so given to violent sacrifices, so prompt to render others impassioned and to be strongly interested themselves; but they feared their impatience and indiscretion,* and this part of the plan was put off. As they could not take too many precautions, the founder of illuminism and his disciples adopted fictitious names. Weishaupt took the name of *Spartacus*, the Baron de Knigge that of *Philo*, Zwach that of *Cato*, the Marquis de Constanza that of *Diomede*, and the bookseller Nicholai that of *Lucien*. Whosoever did not despise the vain noise of renown, had not the fanaticism of Brutus or the audacity of Catiline, was declared incapable of discharging the principal functions of the order,† and the care of recruiting disciples, conspirators, was confided to the *insinuating brethren*, chosen from among the most skilful, and whose instructions provided, that they should maintain grave habits, that they should lead a regular life, and one suitable to preserve their ascendancy;‡ that they should not address themselves either to men of a compromised reputation, nor to those of suspicious morals;§ that they should exert themselves especially to gain public functionaries, the servants of princes, booksellers, postmasters and schoolmasters. Weishaupt wished also that they should study to attract persons of an agreeable exterior. "Such people," he said, "when once formed, are the most suitable for negotiations . . . They are not those who may be commissioned to raise the people, but we must choose their world . . . The eyes, examine the eyes well; and do not neglect the carriage, step and voice in your observations."||

It was not until after he had been attentively observed that a *novice* became a *minerval*, and he was then immediately placed under the guidance of a *directing illuminati*, a true instructor, who, without explaining to him either the tendencies of the association or their definite end, sought to rid the adept by degrees of every prejudice, pointed out a course of reading to him, explained the sense to him with a prudent reserve, appearing sometimes to share opinions which it would have been dangerous to combat too soon, and neglecting nothing to lead to transitions. If the reports of the directing illuminati were favorable to the pupil, the minerval passed to the grade of *illuminated minor*. Then only did he learn that the end of the order was "to make one good and happy family of the human race, without distinction of nation, rank or profession." Still he knew as yet only his institutor, some illuminati of the same grade as himself and the *minervals*. But they did not fail to represent to him that men of eminent minds were admitted to the higher grades;¶ their science, position, credit and wealth were lauded to him; they inspired him, by touching the cords of ambition and pride within his heart, with a desire to become the confidant of virtue or the accomplice of genius.

* Lettre de Minos à Sebastien, 1782.

† Lettre de Spartacus à Caton, February 6, 1778.

‡ Instructions de Weishaupt, in the *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire du Jacobinisme*, t. 3. p. 26.

§ Lettre à Marius et à Caton.

§ Ibid. p. 27.

¶ Robinson, *Proofs of a Conspiracy*, &c., t. 1. p. 173.

When the time came for him to pass to the rank of an illuminated major, he was conducted into a dark room, decorated according to the prescriptions of the masonic ritual, and filled with emblems suitable to move his heart. There he was, after having taken a formidable oath, to expose the concealed history of his life. They immediately opened a book called the *Code Searcher*; they compared its contents with the general confession made by the adept, and they proved to him that all that concerned him was known to the brethren. The most hidden faults of the candidate, his favorite habits, his prejudices, his family affairs, his hatreds, his friendships, his loves, what the *insinuating brothers* had wrenched from his confidence, what he allowed to appear, in the grades of *minor* and *illuminated minor*, the anguishes of his mind or the secret revolutions of his soul, the *Code Searcher* contained all.* And yet they invoked his own testimony against him to prove his sincerity, his self-denial, his faith. The special duty of the *illuminated major* consisted in laboring without repose and relaxation for the development of the common power, by procuring for such members of the sect as the superiors had designated, employments of which he could dispose, or which were dependent on his credit.†

We see how skilfully the web of this plot was woven. And for what ends? This appeared clearly only to the initiated in the grade of *priest* or *epopte*. On the appointed day and hour they went to the residence of the proselyte, where they placed a bandage over his eyes, and conducted him by false routes to the vestibule of the temple of the Mysteries. He remained there for some time, given up to the disorders of his thoughts, and to the disquietudes of waiting. The bandage was finally taken off; he felt a sword in his hand, a voice exclaimed, "enter unfortunate man, but be careful not to leave the door open behind thee," and he found himself in the midst of a vast hall, inundated with light. Before a throne which a magnificent dais surmounted, was a table spread with jewels, golden florins, and on which a sceptre, a crown and a sword glittered. At the foot of the table, on a scarlet cushion, were sacerdotal girdles and a white robe. "Look," then said the chief of the priests; "if this crown, this sceptre, these monuments of human degradation and imbecility, tempt thy pride; if it is there, thy heart is; if thou wishest to aid kings in oppressing men, we can place thee as near the throne as thou desirest; but our sanctuary will be closed to thee, and we will abandon thee to the consequences of thy folly. If thou wishest, on the contrary, to devote thyself to rendering men happy and free, thou art welcome. Here are the attributes of royalty, there those of virtue; do thou decide."‡

If the candidate rejected the jewels, florins, sceptre and crown, he was admitted to a knowledge of the plans of the sect, and of its doctrines. In a vehement, pathetic discourse, which might be thought to have escaped from the indignation of Jean-Jacques himself, the chief of the

* Lettre de Spartacus à Caton, February 6, 1778.

† Mounier, de l'influence attribuée aux philosophes, aux Franc-Maçons, aux illuminés etc. p. 177.

‡ Barruel, Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire du Jacobinisme, t. 3. p. 114.

assembly told what had given value to the world, "he, who, planting the first stake and digging the first ditch, had dared to say, 'this is mine,' and had found people simple enough to believe him." He showed the usurpations of force transformed in succession into rights; tyranny establishing itself at first by violence, then perpetuating itself by trickery; men full of vigor and intellect led to such a point of self-denial, as to bend the knee around the cradle of a child, and to adore crying divinities; the murder of people by one another honored with the name of patriotic courage; highway robberies on a large scale, called conquests; the earth having its damned, more real, alas, than those of the hell of mythology; the bond of nature every where broken, and that they should not confine themselves to a revolution which should be bounded by the overthrow of thrones. A new power was beginning to develop itself, of which it was necessary to be careful. "He who wishes to place nations beneath his yoke, will have to give birth to wants which he alone can satisfy. . . . Erect the *mercantile tribe* into an hierarchical body, (*die kaufmannschaft*,) and you will have created, perhaps, the most formidable of despotisms. For he is the master who can raise up or foresee, stifle or satisfy wants. And who could do this better than an oligarchy of merchants.*

Thus illuminism was preparing for Anacharsis Clootz and Babeuf.

We shall hereafter hear Camille Desmoulins invoke the sans-culotte, Jesus Christ. It was thus that the hierophant of the illuminati placed himself under the invocation of Jesus Christ. Was not he the founder of a secret doctrine, who went about saying, "to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to others in parables?" And in what terms might this doctrine be summed up? "You know that the princes of this world love to rule, it shall not be so with you. Let him who would be the greatest, be the smallest."

Thus, liberty, by the fall of unjust distinctions which give an aliment to hatreds which make some insolent, others base; equality, by the union of hearts in which is fraternal love, behold what the *illuminated priest* was to endeavor to introduce among men, behold the immense and perilous triumph which the sect was commissioned to pursue.

When the orator had finished speaking, a veil was raised, an altar appeared, which was surmounted by an image of the crucified, of that Jesus of Nazareth, the true founder of illuminism. Then falling on his knees, the initiated besought the God of the poor and oppressed. They then cut off some hair from the top of his head, clothed him with sacerdotal ornaments, and presented a cap to him, saying, "cover thyself with this cap; it is of more value than a kingly crown."†

Led by conspirators at once impassioned and meditative, the sect increased rapidly. Unquiet imaginations and excited souls were gained without difficulty by the strangeness of its practices and the mystery that enveloped it. Its deep designs pleased grave, cultivated but daring intellects. It attracted many chosen men. It was there that that always invisible and every where present administration, of which so many con-

* Speech of the Hierophant on the grade of illuminated priest.

† Barruel, *Memoires*, etc., t. 3. p. 155.

temporaneous writers speak, was established.* Unknown informers circulated from one to another, as by an electrical current, secrets wrenched from courts, colleges, chanceries, tribunals, consistories.† Certain unknown travellers were seen sojourning in cities, whose presence, end and fortune were so many problems. Of this number was Cagliostro, an inconceivable mixture of dignity and cunning, of information and ignorance, generous, endowed with a kind of captivating though barbarous eloquence, capable of enthusiasm, holding finally the middle place between the missionary and the adventurer.

An indefatigable traveller, Cagliostro changed his name with his country. Here he was Acharat, there Pellegrini, in another place the Count de Phoenix,‡ and traces of him remained every where. Having arrived at Mitau (1779) he was not long in causing his ascendancy to be saluted. Two hours were enough to subjugate some considerable persons and savants, such as the Count de Médem, Count Howen and Major Vonkorf. A Madame de Recke, who was a great reader of Lavater, and who possessed an exalted adoration for the memory of Christ, became at once intoxicated with the lessons of Cagliostro.§ Affiliated with the sect of the Alchemists, a physician of the Rosicrucian school, and the Paracelsus, the equal of Lavater in the science of physiognomy,|| the guarded rival of the famous astrologer Seni, who had ruled Wallenstein and boasted that he read the shining book of the stars, Cagliostro exercised a truly extraordinary power, during his sojourn at Mitau, and they hastened from every direction towards this PRIEST OF MYSTERY.¶ He was at Frankfort on the Main, when the deputies of the Illuminati met him and determined to secure him.

Weishaupt had always professed much contempt for the tricks of Alchemy and the fraudulent hallucinations of some Rosicrucians. But it is the vice and folly of plots to employ all kinds of instruments. Cagliostro was possessed of powerful means of seduction; it was determined to make use of him.

His initiation took place a short distance from Frankfort, in a subterranean place, and according to forms which he has himself described. An iron chest, filled with papers, was opened. The introducers drew a book from it on the first page of which was read, "*We the grand masters of the templars.*" A formulary of an oath traced with blood followed and at the bottom were eleven signatures. The book, written in French, stated that illuminism was a deep conspiracy against thrones; that the first blows were to reach France; that after the fall of the French monarchy they were to attack Rome; Cagliostro learned from

* Lettre de Comte de Mirabeau a M.... sur Cagliostro et Lavater; le Testament de Cagliostro; Luchet, Essai sur les illuminés. Robinson, proofs of a conspiracy, etc.

† Luchet, Essai sur les illuminés.

‡ Mémoire pour le Comte Cagliostro, contre M. le procureur general, accusateur, in the collection of statements concerning the affair of the necklace. Edit. of 1786.

§ Mémoire sur le séjour de Cagliostro à Mitau by Madame de Recke, p. 8 and 9. Published in German at Berlin in 1787.

|| Lettre d'un habitant de Strasbourg, cited by Madame de Recke, p. 15.

¶ Madame de Recke, séjour, etc., p. 7.

** Deposition of Joseph Balsamo in his life extracted from the proceedings instituted against him at Rome in 1790, chap. 3. p. 130 et 131.

the mouth of his initiators, that the secret society, of which he was now a part, had already strong roots, that it possessed a mass of money dispersed through the banks of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, London, Genoa and Venice; that this money came from an annual tribute paid by the affiliated.* He himself received a large sum destined for the expenses of propagandism, and the instructions of the sect, and went to Strasburg.

There he lived elegantly, giving away much, accepting nothing from any one, astonishing the city by unexpected cures, giving advice to the rich, advice and money to the poor, solacing misery with delicacy, respected by the public authorities, dear to the poor, adored by the people.†

There was then at Saverne, a prelate, whose taste for extraordinary things, and the audacity of whose amours were preparing an immortality for scandal. Informed by public rumor that a philosophical enchanter lived in his neighborhood, the Cardinal Rohan was desirous of knowing Cagliostro, and he commissioned M. de Millinens, his grand huntsman, to ask an audience of him.‡ But in proportion as Cagliostro was affable to the poor, laborers, the populace, so did it please him to treat the great with haughtiness: "If it is an idle curiosity which animates the prince," he replied sharply, "I refuse to see him? if he has need of me, let him say so." This reply, instead of irritating the Cardinal de Rohan, pleased him.§ His urgencies conquered the disdain of the mysterious stranger, he sought his society, felt happy in his friendship, and soon vowed an unbounded admiration for him.

This was all that was known of Cagliostro, when, after a first and short appearance in 1781, he took up his residence in Paris. His noble manners, the prodigious ascendancy he exercised over all about him, his apocalyptic eloquence, the veiled splendor of his life, the beauty of his wife Lorenza Feliciani, and even his enigmatical wealth and suspicious virtues, all served him; they crowded after him.

The house which he occupied in the Rue Sainte-Claude, and in which Barras afterwards dwelt, was one of the most elegant of the quarter. In the saloon, decorated with oriental luxury and shaded with twilight, when it was not shining with the light of an hundred torches, the engagements of the philosopher and the conspirator might be seen by the side of plans of thaumaturgy; the bust of Hippocrates was seen there, and in a black frame might be there read in letters of gold a paragraph from the universal prayer of Pope, "Father of all," etc.

The sect represented by Cagliostro had not indeed any other religion than deism; and this was the case with all the revolutionary and mystic sects to which the close of the eighteenth century gave birth. What mattered the various forms of earthly adoration to the sovereign being from whom so many different diversities spring, and in whom they are

* Vie de Joseph Balsamo, chap. 3. p. 131. Lettre de Mirabeau, etc.

† See La Borde, Lettre sur la Suisse; Lettre du correspondant de Madame de Recke in the Mémoire sur le séjour de Cagliostro à Mitau, and finally, les lettres écrites à M. Gerard, preteur de Strasbourg by Messieurs de Vergennes, Miroménil et Segur, all three ministers.

‡ Mémoire pour le Comte Cagliostro accusé, etc., p. 24.

§ Mémoires de l'abbé Genget. t. 2.

exhibited? Thus thought the innovators of the most recent school of whom Cagliostro was but the blind instrument. For if on the one hand, he served the cause by founding in Paris, as he had done in Mitau, St. Petersburg and Warsaw, Egyptian lodges in which old institutions were deeply decried and shaken;* on the other hand, it is certain, he surpassed the limits which separate a plot from an imposture. He held dark meetings at his house, in which the dignity of the convinced propagandist was effaced behind the artifices of the necromancer. To mask the source of the wealth which he owed to the munificence of the scattered members of his sect,† he feigned to shut himself up, for two days, at the close of each month, and he induced the belief that on coming forth from his retreat, he sent an ingot to the jewellers, the gold of which tried on pumice stone, was almost always finer than that of the Louis.‡ What is still to be said? He placed the physical and moral regeneration of man at the price of some forty superstitions; he uttered predictions; he supposed himself in communication with seven angels, commissioned in accordance with his Egyptian ritual, with the government of the seven planets, and he attributed the power of invoking spirits to young girls, whom he called his *doves* or *pupils*, and who placed in tabernacles hung with white, and surrounded with bewitching preparation, were the accomplices of his sorceries. Vile means, which compromised the end indicated by himself. A true crime committed against a cause which he proclaimed holy, and which did not need to be associated with shameful falsehood. There was, moreover, and it is worth nothing in the history of the human mind, a renown excited by Cagliostro around himself, which resembled glory. Princes, prelates, learned men, nobles of the robe and the sword, were seen flowing to him, mingled with the populace and mere workmen. He could count persons of the highest rank among his partisans, as the Duke of Luxemburg§ and men of recognized merit, as the naturalist Ramond.|| His disciples called him only, *the adored father, the august master*, and showed a devotion full of fervor in obeying him. They wished to have his portrait on medallions and fans; and his bust, cut in marble, or run in bronze, was placed in palaces with this inscription, the DIVINE CAGLIOSTRO.¶ Let us stop; this name borrowed by Joseph Balsamo, the son of a merchant of Palermo, will be found further along beneath our pen, between that of a cardinal and a Queen of France. It was at this period, that *Martinism* came into credit, a doctrine at the bottom of which the revolution was grumbling deeply, a mysterious exposition of a theory which was to give a trial to the most formidable of triumvirates.

Saint Martin had, however, a timid and tender nature. Having obtained, when very young, a lieutenancy in the regiment de Foix,** the

* The judgment pronounced at Rome against Cagliostro in 1790, strikes him for having preached a doctrine which opens a wide-door for sedition.

† At this time a Spaniard, named Thomas Ximenes, was travelling through Europe for the account and at the expense of the illuminati.

‡ M. de Levis, souvenirs et portraits, p. 154 et 155.

§ Mémoire pour le conte Cagliostro, p. 62.

¶ Vie de Joseph Balsamo.

** Œuvres de Casotte, t. 1. Notice sur les illuminés.

|| Ibid.

noise of arms had soon deafened him, and he abandoned himself to the austere seductions of solitude. Plunged in a continual contemplation, he passed his time in benevolence, meditation and music; he despised books,* and listened only to his thoughts; he spoke very little, and only before those whom he loved; and when he opened his soul to them, his words had a feeble and gentle lustre, the light of an expiring lamp. Imagine, at some paces from you, a concert of voices which should be familiar to you, but which fantastic melodies, or a restless and distant clamor, half lost through space, interrupts. . . . Such was the effect which, the *book of errors and truths by an unknown philosopher*, produced. The astonishment was 'at first extreme. Must this concealed author in whom such persuasive eloquence was united to the unseizable genius of the sibyls, be ranked among sages or fools? "The small number of men who are the depositories of the truths which I announce, he said in the beginning,† are vowed to prudence and discretion by formal engagements. Thus I am pleased to use much reserve in this writing, and to envelop myself in a veil which ordinary eyes at least will not pierce, in order that I may sometimes speak of something else, than that of which I appear to treat." Why those turns and this necessity for prudence? What did those formal engagements mean? What were those invisible conspirators who grouped themselves around a book? Never had a more moving and singular work appeared. Like those pictures which present well determined operations of light and shade, there was in it but light or darkness, apparent and studied contradictions. In the name of pious spiritualism, the *unknown philosopher* opposed the folly of human beliefs. He humbled himself at the feet of sovereigns, and he shook their thrones. He was thought to be lost in the region of phantoms, he reappeared suddenly among the living, and then he went to work to dig social misery to frightful depths, he opened the earth to its very abysses. Religions? Their very diversity condemns them.‡ Governments? We can see how false their basis is by their instability, their differences, their foolish quarrels, truth being essentially indestructible, and never producing different or contrary results.§ The civil law? In the midst of discussions to which the unlawful division of the common domain gives rise, they are found wandering in search of right, not knowing where to fix themselves, and under the name of prescription daring to call harsh injustice, justice.|| The criminal law? The monstrous application of similar punishment to dissimilar crimes; a vengeance drawn out by actions, of whose first cause we are ignorant; a sword which in killing the guilty, slays the repentant; a sword which wanders over thousands of heads in the darkest night.¶]

The philosopher opposed the ancient lost happiness to this desolating picture. He conducted his reader through the paths of allegory, to the bosom of that mysterious kingdom, in which men had dwelt in their primitive state. There, there were no arbitrary and artificial distinctions.

* See the preface in the book, *des Erreurs et de la Verite*, p. 6. Edinburgh, 1775.

† Ibid. p. 6.

‡ Ibid. p. 296, 209, *des Faussees religions*.

§ *Des Erreurs et de la Verite*, p. 301, 309.

|| Ibid. p. 317, 318.

¶ Ibid. p. 328, 351.

Although endowed, in their quality of intelligent beings, with different faculties, men, in their primitive state, were not divided into masters and subjects; each of them had his own grandeur, which was suitable to him; all were equals, all kings,* all lived happy.

But the ill principle separated itself from the good principle—for like the Manicheans, the *unknown philosopher* refused to admit that God was the author of evil†—and man of his own accord, by a fatal use of his free will, abandoned his first post. From thence arose unnumbered and immeasurable calamities; illegitimate sovereignties, false religions, the unequal distribution of worldly goods, blind and deaf justice.‡

Man, in falling, had not however ceased to be free. Condemned by his fall to languish as the slave of his body, and to suffer cruelly from the strife between two natures, the intellectual and sensible, which were mixed up in him, he had not on that account lost his quality of being intelligent.§ But to what rule must he conform? To what beacon must he look on this sea of shipwrecks?

According to Saint Martin, there was no possible safety for societies, unless they should be submitted to the action of what he called the ACTIVE AND INTELLIGENT CAUSE. Now this cause which he did not define, but to which he returns in every page of his book, and which is easily discovered when we meditate on it carefully, was, in the chaste and social acceptation of the word . . . love.|| Men no longer lived as brethren; it was on that account they lived unhappily. Their institutions favored the intellectual and sensible faculties, at the expense of the loving; it was on that account, that in their institutions revolt germinated by the side of tyranny. And if political science had been until then but an unformed mass of contradictions and falsehoods, it was because the origin of sovereignty had been placed, now in the consecration of force, now in a chimerical assent of the people,¶ instead of recognizing that he alone had the right to command his like who rises above them by the wish to render them happy, and by the power of loving them. Thus to him alone belonged the empire, and if necessary the dictatorship,** until the time when all men must be *reinstated in their principle*, that is, should have reached equality of enjoyment in the inequality of aptitude and functions, and liberty in agreement.

Thus to the famous cry of Luther, "all men are priests," Saint-Martin replied three centuries after by this sublime cry, "all men are kings."

The phrase of that great enigma which he laid before the French nation, was "liberty, equality, fraternity," a formulary which he called in his symbolical style, that SACRED TERNARY, and of which he always spoke in the tone of solemn enthusiasm.†† "I declare that none respects that SACRED TERNARY more than I do. . . I protest that I believe it has existed from eternity, and will exist for ever . . . I dare say to my fellows that, notwithstanding all the veneration they have for this ternary, the idea which they entertain of it, is still below what they should do. I invite them to be very reserved in their judgments on this subject."

* Des Erreurs et de la Verité, p. 299, 295.

† Ibid. p. 18, 26.

‡ Ibid. p. 264, 272.

§ Ibid. p. 60, 54.

** Ibid. 281, 283.

† Ibid. p. 5, 10.

|| Ibid. p. 40.

†† Ibid. p. 137.

Every doctrine which is concealed behind symbols is committed to the hazard of interpretations; this was the rock of Martinism. In the paths which were laid out beneath its obscure shades, some like d'Epréménil,* stopped at the first steps, others, like Amar,† surpassed its farthest limits. But its impression was no less immense. A disciple of Martinez Paschalis and of Jacob Boehm, Saint Martin in his turn had many a faithful disciple. The Duchess de Bourbon received him at her house, and we are assured, lent a charmed ear to his sober conversation.‡ Perhaps she may have thought him fallen into a pleasant madness. But like Cagliostro, he could have said, "The blow of the master remains on my heart;" for in surrounding himself with shadows, he had only obeyed the inspirations of vulgar prudence, and his mysticism was but the calculation of a profound soul. When he wrote "the shade and darkness are the asylums which truth prefers,"§ he knew by what springs human nature wishes to be governed in imperfect civilizations; he knew that in order to exercise the intelligence and sense of his proselytes, to prove their constancy, it was well to impose a difficult task on them; that to render the truth precious, it was important to give it to them, as a recompense to deserve, as a treasure to discover.||

And in fact, the more obscure the words of the master were, the more sovereign did they become. Martinism made rapid conquests in Paris; it reigned in Avignon: it chose Lyons as a centre from whence it radiated into Germany and even into Russia.¶ Ingrafted upon free-masonry, the new doctrine constituted a rite which was composed of ten grades or degrees of instruction, through which the adepts were to pass in succession; and numerous schools were formed for the sole end of finding the key of the mystic code, of commenting on it, of spreading it.** Behold how from a book, thought at first to be unintelligible, sprung a vast ensemble of combinations and efforts which contributed to enlarge the mine dug beneath old institutions.

But invisible agitators were not enough for a society greedy of excitement; it required prodigies to be exhibited, and scenes of tumultuous astonishment; and whilst Martinism was silently attacking the basis of the old moral world, scenes were transpiring in the place Vendôme, in which all the ordinary laws of the physical world appeared to be reversed.

In the midst of a great hall, around a vat filled with sulphur iron, covered with a lid, and at the bottom of which bottles full of water were lying, some in converging rays and with their necks turned towards the centre of the vat, others in a symmetrical position, and in an opposite direction, you might have seen numerous sick persons seated, pale with pain or emotion. That the mysterious fluid to which the power of curing them was attributed, might circulate, they touched each other

* Robinson, *Proofs of a Conspiracy*, etc. vol. 1. p. 66.

† Mounier, de l'influence attribuée aux philosophes, etc. p. 160.

‡ Œuvres de Cazotte, notice sur les illuminés, t. 1.

§ Des Erreurs et de la Vérité, p. 236.

|| Ibid.

¶ Clavel, *Hist. Pittoresque de la franc maçonnerie*, chap. 5. p. 176.

** Barruel, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire du Jacobinisme*, t. 2. p. 244. Hamburg, 1803.

by the hands, knees and feet. A long cord starting from a ring in the lid, surrounded the infirm limbs, without being knotted, and each held against the suffering parts of his body, moveable iron rods, which started from different holes in the cover. The atmosphere was impregnated with sweet odours, penetrating melodies were heard, and unknown sensations communicating themselves far and near to the sick, the living circle began to groan. Most of them, especially the women, underwent nervous spasms, suffocations; their eyes were closed; they felt fainting sensations; they entered the regions of dreams. Soon to the prolonged strains of the musical glasses, to the noise of voices which rose in chorus beneath the empire of some indefinable and powerful charm, the languor gave place to convulsions. There were on all sides plaintive accents, cries of joy, immoderate laughter, sobs, or even mad and impassioned embraces. A room, covered with mattresses, was then opened, into which the most violent were carried, it was the *hall of the crisis*. There the transports frequently assumed the character of phrenzy. Women were then seen rolling on the cushioned floor, or beating their heads against the wadded walls. A person dressed in lilac silk, walked with a tranquil and grave air through this distracted crowd, now extending a wand with magical effect over the sick, now approaching them, applying his hand to their shoulders, then allowing it to glide down their arms to the very ends of the fingers. This led to the last term of their development, the crises were finally dissipated, and they carried off, it was said, the disease with them.*

The man who appeared thus to command life came to us from Germany; he was a physician named Mesmer.

What there was true or false in his system, and whether it were a work of genius, falsehood or error, we have not to examine here. But for the few who love and respect in history the epopee of the human mind, it would not be useless to show in what mesmerism seconded the march of those mystic revolutionists whose trace we are seeking.

Mesmer fancied the celestial spheres, the earth and all created beings, as plunged in an immense fluid, by the intervention of which they exercised a permanent influence over one another.† This influence, analogous to the properties of the lover, he called *animal magnetism*.‡ To assemble a portion of the universal fluid, to concentrate, direct the movement or current, communicate it to another, either by immediate contact, or at a certain distance, by the simple direction of the finger, or of some conductor, was to magnetize;§ and to possess such a power, was, according to Mesmer, to possess the power of healing. Health, he said, consists in the regular action of nature. If obstacles arise, nature makes an effort to surmount them. From thence arise the crises, sometimes

* Rapport des medecins choisis dans la faculté de Paris. Bailly, Rapport secret sur le magnétisme animal. Virey Dictionnaire des sciences médicales, art. Magnétisme. Burdin, jeune; et Dubois (d'Amiens). Hist. Académique du magnétisme animal, p. 5. et. 6.

† Premier Mémoire de Mesmer, proposition 1. p. 12. les Mémoires et Aphorismes de Mesmer. Germer-Baillère, 1842.

‡ Ibid. p. 145. Aphorisme, 80.

§ Rapport de la Société Royale de Médecine, première parties, § 4.

salutary, sometimes fatal, but inevitable, and such as magnetism alone can provoke or accelerate without danger.* "There is but one health, one sickness, one remedy."†

The magnetic processes, of which the scene of the *bucket* has since been judged superfluous, offered the most attractive and most extraordinary image of communication that had ever been imagined. It was as if were the life of one passing in a visible manner into that of another. The human body was regarded as having a *north and south pole*. Men became animated bars.‡

Thus, theory or practice, every thing in mesmerism, contributed to bring to light the law of mutual dependence, the law of union; and by a meeting as remarkable as unexpected, the flights of Mesmer became united with the occult philosophy of Saint Martin.

Saint Martin affirmed the unity of the moral world by the name of the **ACTIVE AND INTELLIGENT CAUSE**; Mesmer that of the physical world by the name of the **UNIVERSAL FLUID**.

Saint Martin glorified the attraction of souls, love; Mesmer the attraction of bodies, magnetism.

Saint Martin made the safety of empires result from the imperious, decisive but sympathetic action of superior over less powerful natures; Mesmer attached the cure of diseases to an analogous action.

They proclaimed together the doctrine of conjunction, in dividing between them the two great aspects of life.

Instinct draws animated beings together, whilst reason divides them. Thus Mesmer was not afraid to write, "Instinct is an effect of harmony;§ reason is factitious,|| and we read this beautiful definition in his aphorisms, "The life of man is a part of the universal movement."¶

That Mesmer cast discredit on his part by gross biases; that the truly noble side of his hypothesis half escaped him, is possible. What matters it? Is it necessary for an echo to have a consciousness of the word which strikes it, and which it prolongs? Most of those who pass across the earth, making a noise upon it, are but fragile speaking trumpets. When the sound shall have been uttered, you are at liberty to break the instrument. The thinker, is thought.

Mesmer came to Paris in 1778, but rejected by the learned, treated with disdain by Daubenton, and Vicq. d'Azir,** he had been confined to obscure efforts, and was in despair, when d'Ealon became his disciple. Physician to the Count d'Artois, d'Ealon had elevated relations, a charming figure, wit, and the audacity of youth; the foreign doctor had an impetuous and useful auxiliary in him. A first memoir apprised the public of the marvellous cures performed by Mesmer in Germany, the injustice he had to endure, the light reception given to his discovery by

* Mémoires et Aphorismes de Mesmer, p. 172. (Aphorismes, 333 et 334.) Kurtz Sprengel, Hist. de la Médecine, (traduction de M. Jordan,) t. 6. p. 101 et 102. Paris, 1815.

† Mémoires et Aphorismes de Mesmer, p. 172. Aph. 333.

‡ Procédés de d'Ealon, à la suite des Mémoires et Aphorismes, p. 208 et 209.

§ Mémoires et Aphorismes, Aphorisme, 194.

|| Ibid. Aph. 197.

¶ Ibid. Aph. 198.

** Foissac, Rapports et discussions sur le magnétisme animal. Note 4, p. 220.

the Academy of Berlin, the league formed against him by the savants of Vienna, and how, after having received into his house and almost entirely cured a young girl who was blind, he had seen, thanks to the promptings of a black cabal, the gratitude of her parents turned into bitterness and violence, until finally the father came to re-demand his child from him with reproaches on his lips and a sword in his hand.* This memoir, which had the tendency to procure for Mesmer the interest which persecuted genius inspires, ended with twenty propositions containing the principal bases of the system. D'Eslon shone out in his turn. Not content with having published a lively commentary on the doctrine of the master, he was not afraid to address an insulting defiance to the faculty of medicine. Let them make choice of twenty-four sick persons, twelve of whom should be treated after the magnetic method, and twelve in the usual way; the public to be the judges of the field. A refusal and a threat to strike d'Eslon from the list of members, if he persevered, was the reply of the faculty.†

But it was no longer possible to stifle magnetism by contempt. Mesmer and d'Eslon found an energetic support, both in the secret societies of which they were members,‡ and in the Martinist sect, of which their system formed as it were a counter-proof, and also in that revolutionary restlessness for which every bold novelty then served as an aliment.

On the other, de Lasone, the physician to the king, had presented Mesmer at court,§ and Marie Antoinette, always ready to take an interest in the unforeseen, favored the German doctor. Public curiosity once awakened, resistance did but irritate it. The magnetic cures multiplied. All Paris was agitated about the mesmeric doctrine; the excitement became so general and imperious, that the government became uneasy when Mesmer spoke of leaving France. They must treat with the fortunate stranger like power with power. They adjure him to remain, they surround him; they propose to him as the price of his information communicated to physicians whom the government shall select, twenty thousand livres of annuities and ten thousand of rentes.|| In the intoxication of his pride and success, he refused and left, but the triumphs of Eslon soon recalled him. His disciple was his rival.¶

There were manifested with unexampled fury that thirst for unusual things, those vague and yet burning aspirations, that impatience to be astonished, that need to be excited, the torments of a society which carried the greatest of revolutions in its bowels, and felt it starting there. With greedy hearts and imagination shaken by desire, women hastened to seat themselves in crowds at the drama of the banquet of human existence. The Princess de Lamballe was surprised at the magnetic bucket of Eslon.** It was maintained that Marie Antoinette herself had been

* Premier Mémoire de Mesmer, p. 35.

† Burdin Jeune et Dubois (d'Amiens) Hist. Academique du magnétisme animal, p. 13, 14 et 15. Foissac, Rapports et discussions de l'Academie Royale de Médecine sur le magnétisme animal. Note 1. p. 221.

‡ Kurts-Sprengel, Hist. de la Médecine, t. 6. p. 104.

§ Hist. de la Médecine, p. 103.

|| Rapports et discussions, etc. Note 1. p. 222.

** Bachaumont, Mémoires Secrets, t. 25. p. 252 et 253.

¶ Ibid.

recognized there in disguise.* In order to enrich Mesmer, his partisans called on an hundred subscribers to buy from him the knowledge of his secret, by paying an hundred Louis each; this sum was not only reached, but surpassed. The enthusiasm gains over Epréménil, the famous advocate Bergasse, Servan, Duport, renowned literati, savants, priests; so much so, that at Bourdeaux a celebrated preacher of the day, Father Hevier, stops one day in the midst of a sermon, descends from the pulpit, and magnetizes in open church a female who had fainted.† There were now only inflamed attacks, fanatical replies. "The magicians of Pharaoh," said Court de Gébelin, in a pamphlet in which he announced himself cured by Mesmer, "the magicians of Pharaoh were only magnetizers; but being ignorant of the theory of the magnetic system, they could not pierce the depth of the mysteries to which they ascended in modern times, in forming prophets and sibyls, whom no human power could defeat." Court de Gébelin died at the very time he was affirming his cure; and it is doubtful if public opinion took any account of this tragical falsehood.‡ In vain were the magnetic processes studied at the house of Eslon, and solemnly condemned by two commissions, one of the Royal Society of Medicine, the other of the Faculty of Medicine and the Academy of Sciences. It was remarked that Jussieu separated himself from his compeers; his impartial and moderate report was opposed to those which Bailly, Lavoisier, Guillotin, d'Arcet, Poissonnier Desperrières and Franklin had signed; it was observed that if the effects of magnetism were to be attributed only to the imagination, this power of rekindling the torch of life through it was a very great good and a very marvellous reality. The number of pupils increased then, to an extraordinary point. The Mesmerian method left Paris, propagated itself in the provinces, passed the sea, reached Saint Domingo,§ and constituting itself in accordance with the ritual of free-masonry, the society of the magnetizers adopted the expressive name of *order and harmony*.

This appeared to be besides the time for prodigies, for the fraternal genius of the two Montgolfiers had invented labors, and Pilatre des Rosiers, accompanied by the Marquis d'Arlandes, had ventured triumphantly through the air. It was soon announced that the physician Charles, emulous of the two Montgolfiers, had constructed a new machine, which, filled with inflammable air, was also to navigate among the winds; and in fact, on the 27th of August, 1784, in the presence of an innumerable multitude which covered the Champ de Mars, on a showery and threatening day, in the midst of the war of cannon fired in signal of the victory,|| whilst shouts of admiration were resounding from all quarters, and whilst alarmed females were losing their consciousness, or were raising their hands to heaven in prayer, Charles and Robert mounted their aerial ship, and rose smiling towards the region of the storms.

* Burdin Jeune et Dubois, (d'Amiens,) Hist. etc. p. 23.

† Bachaumont, Mémoires Secrets, t. 25. p. 251.

‡ Burdin Jeune et Dubois, (d'Amiens,) Hist. Académique du magnétisme animal, p. 20. Kurtz-Sprengel, Hist. de la Médecine, t. 6. p. 106.

§ Deleuze, Hist. Critique du magnétisme animal, t. 1. p. 20. Paris, 1819.

|| Bachaumont, Mémoires secrets, t. 23. p. 128.

How can we not recognize in such brilliant marks the immensity of the power of man? Impossible! Vain word with which so many ages of ignorance were satisfied, but which the virility of the human race rejected. Behold with what sights, what discourses the enthusiasm of ardent souls cherished itself.

The rumor was suddenly spread, that the Marquis of Puységur and his brother Count Maxime, had drawn unexpected and surprising consequences from the system of Mesmer at Busancy, near Soissons. They were not agitated this time about the marvels of the *hall of the crises*, which were already declared dangerous; they were assured that beneath trees garnished with a thick foliage and magnetized, sick persons sunk into a kind of divine slumber. During the ecstasies of this sleep, they read, it was said, in their own bodies as well as in an open book; they pointed out truly healing remedies; they saw beyond the ray which the age is permitted to traverse; they had the gift of foreknowledge. What was required to produce these inexplicable phenomena? M. de Puységur replied in two words to the age of Voltaire, *believe, will*.*

Such was then the fever of the mind that somnambulism in its turn made its fortune. They explained by magnetic secrets the lives of Apollonius, of Tyanus, and of Apaleus, celebrated magicians, who had endeavored to save expiring paganism by means of their enchantments. They believed them to be in the possession of that power, which had painted the immortal code in lively images, in which was said "faith removes mountains." *Wish well, go and be cured*, became the sacramental formulæ of a numerous active sect, at the head of which we must place Lavater,† that Lavater, whose influence Mirabeau, his detractor, thus denounced, "He exercises an empire which Socrates or Plato never did. . . . I have seen his partisans revere him as a God on earth. I have seen other men in suspense as to the opinion they should form of him. I have seen the philosophers alarmed at his credit."§

The sect of the illuminati was, however, to receive a terrible blow. An unforeseen misunderstanding sprang up between Weishaupt and Baron Knigge, his most useful auxiliary, and four discontented adepts made important revelations to the elector of Bavaria. A search is ordered; the pursuit begins; papers seized at Landshut, develop a part of the plan of the illuminati, and Weishaupt is compelled to seek an asylum with a romantic prince, Duke Ernest, of Gotha. Persecution commences and extends itself; many marked citizens are dismissed, exiled, imprisoned. The sect was dissolved; its action survived. A deputation of the illuminati, of whom Busche, known in illuminism by the name of Bayard, was one, and Bode, surnamed Aurelius, were sent for to Paris to introduce it there into certain masonic lodges.|| The Martinists were ploughing their furrow at the same time. Life was nourished in the clubs by the general fermentation. The disciples of Mesmer,

* Puységur, *Mémoires pour Servier*, etc.; Epigraph.

† Kurts-Sprengel, *Hist. de la Médecine*, t. 6, p. 117.

‡ See in the pamphlet of Mirabeau already quoted, la lettre de M. le diacre Lavater au Médecin de la Cour de Hanovre, Zurich, September 10, 1785.

§ Lettre du Comte de Mirabeau à M. . . . Sur Cagliostro et Lavater, p. 43.

|| Robinson, *proofs of a conspiracy*, etc., vol. 2, p. 153 etc.

ridiculed upon the stage,* were defended by the eloquent pen of Epréménil,† and their protest rose to threats. Every thing was in agitation, every thing was hurrying along.

If we now embrace at a glance the preceding facts, we shall remark in them at first a violent reaction against the philosophy of Voltaire and the Encyclopedists. This philosophy had handed over the altar to doubt, to reasoning, to the spirit of examination and of individualism. Here on the contrary they abandoned themselves unreservedly to the imagination, to the sovereignty of faith, to the most disordered inspirations of the heart, and urged the feeling of the connection which should unite men, to a kind of delirium.

But exaggerated, approaching to superstition as this last movement might be, it had no less a very decided revolutionary bearing. It sapped the old tyranny by mystic conspiracies; it interested men in the victory of the equality of these two moving powers of human nature; imagination and a love for the unknown, through the occult philosophy; it proved the physical connection of men, and was the image of their moral connection, by miraculous cures attributed to the attractive force of an universal fluid. These were the tendencies of Jean-Jacques strangely applied, pushed too far, obscured. The disciples went towards the indicated end, by wandering from the highway, and by concealing beneath their mantles the lamp which the master had lit.

The effort which was to prevent the revolution from being extinguished in the triumph of burgherism, was prepared by the labor of the secret societies. These were, if not the germinating principles, at least the first apparent germs of that manly enthusiasm, that strange and concentrated heroism, that will in sacrifice, that ardor in making a compact with death, which the ulterior struggles developed in so energetic a manner. Those to whom they said before an image of Jesus dead on the cross for the safety of men, "Safety is not where thrones dazzle, defended by the sword, or where censers smoke, or where thousands of men are starved among fields covered with flocks. The revolution which is about to break out will be sterile unless it is complete,"‡ might have certainly foreseen and without being prophets, that they would have a furious resistance to overcome, and a sea of blood to cross.

A scene took place about this time which we should pass by in silence, were it not solemnly attested to by grave persons.§ A splendid dinner was given by an academician to many of the courtiers and philosophers, and among the guests was a writer, who destined to combat against the revolution, and to perish in it, was then counted in the number of Martinist illuminati.|| It was Jacques Cazotte. The repast was very gay. They talked about the progress of reason, and of events which were announcing themselves; and all hailed the approaching reign of enfranchised intellect. Cazotte alone was silent. Being questioned, he replied that he

* The farce of the Docteurs Modernes.

† The article of Epréménil was styled: *Réflexions préliminaires à l'occasion de la piéce des Docteurs Modernes, jouée sur le theatre italien.*

‡ Discours pour le grade d'illuminé, *passim*.

§ La Harpe, an eyewitness. See les Œuvres de Jacques Cazotte, t. 1. p. 21.

|| Notice historique sur Cazotte, p. 7.

saw terrible things in the future, and as Condorcet took a tone of raillery, he said to him, "You, M. Condorcet, will poison yourself, to escape the executioner." Joyous shouts of laughter were heard. Cazotte continued; he predicted to Chamfort, that he would open his own veins; to Bailly, to Malesherbes, and to Roucher, that they would die on the scaffold. But our sex at least will be spared," said the Dutchess de Grammont, laughing. "Your sex? You, madam, and many other ladies with you, will be conducted in a cart to the place of execution with your hands tied behind your backs." As he spoke the countenance of Cazotte changed; his blue eyes were full of sadness, and his sixty-eight years, his white hair, his patriarchal physiognomy impressed a mournful gravity on his language; the guests started: "You will see," replied Madame de Grammont, "that he will not leave me a confessor."—"No, madam, the last person punished who will have one will be. . ." he hesitated for a moment. "Will be . . . the King of France." All the guests rose, seized with an unconquerable emotion. Cazotte was about to retire, when Madame de Grammont, approaching him, and wishing to provoke some less sombre predictions, said to him, "And you, sir, prophet, what will be your fate?" He remained for some time with his head bent down, and with a pensive look, and then replied, "During the siege of Jerusalem, a man made the tour of the ramparts seven days in succession, crying out in a sinister tone, *misfortune to Jerusalem*. On the seventh day he exclaimed, *mishap to myself*, and at the moment an enormous stone hurled from the machines of the enemy struck him, and crushed him." With these words Cazotte bowed and retired.

CHAPTER IV.

THE AFFAIR OF THE NECKLACE.

The affair of the Necklace—Cardinal Rohan and Madame de la Motte—The letters handed over—Scene in the park—What passed at the chateau during the negotiation for the Necklace—Singular address to M. de Souza by Marie Antoinette; new lights—Madame de la Motte received by Cardinal Rohan—Madame de la Motte at the house of the Duke of Penthièvre—Arrest of Cardinal Rohan—Arrest of Madame de la Motte at the abbey of Clairveaux; they refuse to seize her husband—The parliament convened—The reclamations of the high clergy of France—Secret interrogatories—Public discussions—Enormous scandal in France, and through all Europe—Memorial of Cagliostro; pamphlet of Mirabeau against Cagliostro and Lavater—The ambassador of France and M. de la Motte at London—Rumors of assassination—Acquittal of the Cardinal; enthusiasm of the public; despair of the Queen—Condemnation of Madame de la Motte; her fury—Visit of the Princess de Lamballe to Salpêtrière—Escape of Madame de la Motte—Madame Polignac at the waters of Bath—Silence purchased and not kept—Disrepute of the Monarchy.

THE *marriage of Figaro* had been represented, and the emotion produced by it, was still felt, when a drama, much more profound, and this time real, seized on public attention.

A queen of France, a prelate, an adventuress of royal blood, a courtesan,

a doubtful gentleman, a gendarme, a mysterious stranger, part charlatan, part conspirator, were the personages. The scene was laid in the hall of a criminal court. All Europe was the audience.

Do not be astonished that we descend a little before proceeding further into this affair of the necklace, so famous and so obscure. What is more suitable to dissipate the prestige of conventional glory, to ruin, for the advantage of individualism, the old principle of authority, that the sight of the crown fallen not only into the dust, but into the very mire of the courts? When history takes upon itself to make dramas, it usually makes them serious ones; this one was terrible. There was seen a prince of the Rohan family accused of robbery, a cardinal confronted with a courtesan, a grand almoner of France bent beneath the weight of an infamous connection; there was seen a queen, the daughter of Maria Theresa, reduced to abandon her questioned virtue and insulted honor to the chances of a controversy, full of scandal. The nobility in its turn took sides. The Rohans were opposed to the Bourbons. The descendants of the knights were the first to tarnish the reputation of their sovereign. The ministry was divided. Europe was inundated with libels. Finally, the life of the great, their jealousies, quarrels and intrigues were given up to the commentaries of the multitude; contempt rose instead of descending. We add that it was the parliament which decided between the wife of the king and a prince of the church, which made the magistracy an arbiter between two powers which it had until then only envied whilst serving. All that was certainly a menacing novelty. Let us think about dates; the affair of the necklace was in 1785; the revolution in 1789.*

The Prince de Rohan had a dignified figure, much ambition, wit, a soul invaded with a thirst for pleasures, a decided taste for ostentation. Marie Antoinette had conceived a hatred against him whose causes have been differently explained. The partisans of the prince say,† that when ambassador at Vienna, he had written a letter to the Duke d'Aiguillon, which court treason divulged, which represented Maria Theresa as weeping over divided Poland at the very time she was appropriating a share to herself. Others maintain,‡ that Louis de Rohan had pursued Marie Antoinette with indiscreet homages, and had boasted of them with insolent lightness; a version moreover which the gallant manners of the prelate, the habitual heedlessness of his vanity and his excessively presumptuous character did not deny.

Be that as it may, the queen hated him, and he, though named successively, and always in despite of her,§ grand almoner of France, cardinal, abbot of Saint-Waast d'Arras, provisor of the Sorbonne, could not resign himself to an aversion, which he was however in a position to brave. He attempted to justify himself, but was harshly repulsed, and his hopes were beginning to be extinguished, when an unforeseen circumstance relighted them. A woman was presented to him, who was descended in a direct

* *Mémoires inédits du Comte Beugnot—Souvenirs et portraits par M. de Lévis*, p. 163.

† *Mémoires de l'abbé Georgel*, t. 2. p. 6. Paris, 1820.

‡ *Justificatory memoirs of the Countess de la Motte (a suspicious piece)*, London, 1789.

§ *Mémoires de l'abbé Georgel*, t. 2. p. 12 et suiv.

line through the counts de Saint-Remy, from Henry the Second,* and who consequently bore the name of Valois. This woman was possessed of grace and mind. Married for some time to the count de la Motte, who served then in the gendarmerie, she had been subjected to proofs calculated to add a romantic interest to the seductions of her person. Her father spent the remains of hereditary wealth, and was obliged to fly from his domains which were sold, in fact ran away during the night, abandoning the youngest of his children in a basket, beneath the windows of a neighboring farmer. Taking two other children and his wife who was with child with him, he went first to Paris, and then to Boulogne, where the Hotel Dieu received him dying. He left as his only only heritage the parchment which proved that the descendant of Henry the Second had died on the truckle bed of a vagabond. The children were not however forsaken. The Marchioness de Boulainvilliers, touched by their distress, received them, and brought them up, and Madame de la Motte having proved her origin had for some time received a pension of eight hundred livres.

Such were the recitals by which M. de Rohan was charmed. He became the benefactor of the young countess, her friend, and was not long in making her a confidant. Already protected by Madame Elizabeth, she aspired to a higher protection. She sought the support of the queen; the cardinal encouraged this thought, and he soon learned from Madame de la Motte, that her success surpassed their expectations; that after presenting a petition, the queen had remarked her, had desired to see her again, had received her with kindness, and had promised her the favor of a secret intimacy.

The Cardinal de Rohan was transported with joy at this news. He had hopes in the budding credit of the countess, and he besought her to negotiate with the queen, with all suitable management, the reconciliation so ardently desired. Madame de la Motte having consented to it without difficulty, the steps commenced, or were thought to commence, and their first result was permission granted to the cardinal to justify himself. He wrote, obtained a reply, wrote again, and so well, that an active correspondence was established between him and the queen through Madame de la Motte.

Was she really admitted to the intimacy of Marie Antoinette? Were the letters she handed the cardinal true or forged?

We note that the letters of the queen, at first cold and constrained, became gradually colored with tints, which were not, by many steps, those of hatred or disdain; that they had animated the audacity of the cardinal who thought them authentic; that they had awakened in his disturbed heart feelings whose expression he knew not how to moderate, nor flight to regulate;† in a word, he thought himself loved. In his capacity of grand almoner of France, he had a thousand opportunities of seeing the queen, if but cursorily, but his impatience did not wait

* *Mémoire sur la Maison de St. Remy de Valois*, signed by Ozier de Serigny, judge of the Coats of Arms of the Nobility of France.

† The Abbé Georgel himself, the out and out defender of the cardinal, is compelled to admit this, which he does with some embarrassment.

for them, and since the debut of his correspondence, he asked for a private audience through Madame de la Motte.

A strange scene occurred in the gardens of Versailles towards the close of the month of August, 1784.* A disguised man appeared in a grove situated at the end of a green meadow, between eleven o'clock and midnight. It was the Cardinal Rohan. He was going to meet the queen. The night was very dark. A woman covered with a white mantle and having her head enveloped in a *therèse*, was awaiting him at the appointed place. The cardinal advances, full of emotion. He hears these words, "You know what this means," and a rose was presented to him. He takes it, presses it to his heart, and is preparing to reply, when suddenly a well known voice murmurs in his ear, "Come, come, Madame and the Countess d'Artois are approaching." He hastily rejoins the Baron de Planta, one of his intimates and Madame de la Motte who had followed him. They all disappear.†

The situation of Madame de la Motte had in the mean time assumed an entirely different aspect. Up to 1784, she had lived miserably by some bounties obtained from the royal treasury, from various assistances granted to her entreaties, or from the respect which her birth inspired, and by her pension of eight hundred livres, which had been increased to fifteen hundred.‡ She had sometimes surrounded herself with a certain external éclat;§ but this was only a falsehood of her pride, or a calculation of her boldness, for she said voluntarily, "There are but two ways of asking alms; at the doors of churches or in a carriage."|| In 1784, every thing changed. She bought a carriage, had saddle horses, kept house. She received important personages at her table; the Marquis de Saisseval, the Abbé de Cabres, counsellor to parliament; Rouillé d'Orfeuil, intendant of Champagne; the Count d'Estaing, a receiver general, Dorcy, and the tone of her house was that of good society. She was far from concealing her intercourse with the queen; she even boasted of it, and the opinion which was entertained of her hidden influence, procured her homages and friends.¶ About this time she made a journey to Bar-Sur-Aube. She had been known there as poor and reduced to the expedients of poverty; they were astonished by her display. She displayed complacently a rich set of diamonds—it was nine months before any thing was said of the purchase of the necklace**—she had embroidered dresses from Lyons, her service of plate was complete and of the newest fashion. She paid her debts, she remembered such of her creditors as had forgotten her, she scattered benefits around her, and finally created so favorable an opinion for herself in the mother of M. Beugnot, that she was afterwards unwilling to believe her guilty.†† Whence came this sudden opulence? Those who were in the

* The Abbé Georgel, in his recital, places this scene after the purchase of the necklace. It is a gross error, and the *Mémoires de l'Abbé Georgel* contain many such.

† *Mémoire pour la demoiselle le Gay d'Oliva*, par Me. Blondel, p. 26.

‡ *Mémoire pour Louis Edward de Rohan*, par Me. Target, p. 10 et 16.

§ *Ibid.* p. 13.

|| *Mémoires inédits de M. le Comte Beugnot*.

¶ This is stated, as a reproach to her, in the *Mémoire de Me. Target*, p. 17.

** *Mémoires inédits de M. le Comte Beugnot*.

secret of her relations with Prince Louis de Rohan, were less surprised than scandalized. He was immensely rich. The Abbey of Saint Waast alone brought him a revenue of three hundred thousand livres; the rents of his property of Coupvrai were thirty thousand, and he owned a magnificent residence at Saverne, in Alsace. He was still more prodigal than wealthy, as his debts, which amounted to two millions, showed.* The fortune of Madame de la Motte was referred then to the empire she exercised over a generous, careless and voluptuous prince. Could he besides leave in misery a woman who had offered to serve the double interest of his ambition and his love? He could do so the less, since success appeared to reply to his desires; never had he been so fortunate. He did not know he was on the verge of a horrible catastrophe.

Boëhmer and Bassange, the crown jewellers, had had a necklace for some time, for which they asked no less than a million six hundred thousand livres, and whose sale they urged ardently. Boëhmer had frequently spoken to the queen about it, but always in vain. In 1778, Marie Antoinette, when about to give birth to her first child, saw Louis the Sixteenth approach her one day, smiling and delighted. "I have something for you," he said, and he opened a magnificent casket, which contained the necklace of Boëhmer. The queen threw a disdainful glance upon it and refused it,† not without affectation.

Some years passed by. Boëhmer had carried his necklace to all the sovereigns of Europe. In the month of October, 1781, the day on which the first dauphin was born, the offer of the necklace was renewed to the queen by Louis the Sixteenth, who was delighted to have a male heir. But this time the refusal of Marie Antoinette was unexpected and inexplicable. "Is it to enable Boëhmer to take his daughters covered with diamonds to the opera, that you would pay him for the folly which has made him collect in this necklace sums that he should have had scattered in trade?" The queen was very animated whilst speaking; the nurse felt her pulse, and finding it very high,‡ besought the king to insist no more upon it. Louis the Sixteenth retired entirely prohibited from speaking. What did this anger, so strange, so even offending to the king, mean? Did so much excitement arise from a lively and secret desire opposed by the necessity or the convenience of a refusal, at a time when the treasury was empty and public opinion was indignant at the profusion of the court?

Boëhmer was not discouraged. Towards the end of December, 1784, having heard of the credit which Madame de la Motte had with the queen, he had recourse to her, offering her large sums to interest herself in the negotiation. She refused. The affair then remained in suspense, and in the meantime M. Souza was commissioned to negotiate for the necklace for the queen of Portugal. The Cardinal de Rohan was at Saverne during the month of December, 1784; he returned to Paris on the 6th of January, 1785.

On the 24th, Madame de la Motte, who in her first interview with the jewellers had manifested so much repugnance to have any thing to do

* Mémoires de l'Abbé Georgel, t. 2. p. 143 et 144.

† Mémoires de Mademoiselle Bertin, p. 91.

with the matter,* went to them and announced to them that the cardinal would visit them; that he was commissioned to purchase the necklace for Marie Antoinette, and, (what we must not forget,) she asked them at the same time, to take all possible precautions.†

The announced visit took place. The cardinal went to the jewellers, and as he asked to see different jewels, they placed the great necklace of brilliants before him. He told them he was commissioned to inquire its lowest price. They answered, "a million, six hundred thousand livres," and they added, that they had long entertained a hope of selling it to Marie Antoinette, but that this flattering hope appearing to decrease, they had determined to send a drawing of it to the princess of the Asturias. The prince declared he would take the diamonds; that they were not for himself, but for a purchaser whom he could not name, and that in case this could not be done, he would make private arrangements; that his instructions moreover allowed him to treat with Boëhmer only—the member of the firm who was in communication with Marie Antoinette. Boëhmer having observed that it was impossible for him to negotiate so important an affair without the participation of his colleague, the cardinal replied, that he must have other instructions, in order to know if he were at liberty to treat with them jointly.

This is what is found in the memoir handed afterwards by Boëhmer and Bassange to the queen, of what happened at their first interview with the cardinal.‡

Two days having gone by, the jewellers received a note in the cardinal's handwriting, which invited them to call on him, and bring the *object in question* with them. On that day, the prince informed them of his propositions, which they accepted; they consisted in the purchase of the necklace, in payments of six months. On the 1st of February, there was another letter from M. de Rohan. The jewellers went to him with the necklace, and then only the cardinal confides to them under the seal of secrecy what they already knew from Madame de la Motte, to wit: that it was the queen who was buying the necklace. Then showing them the propositions, accepted by them, he made them remark these words on the margin: *Approved, Marie Antoinette de France.*|| Having been warned by Madame de la Motte to take precautions, they had manifested fears as to the payment; and to satisfy them, it had been necessary to introduce the name of the queen.

Now at the time the negotiation we are recalling was going on, the following scene occurred at the chateau. The queen being at her toilette, Mademoiselle Bertin, her milliner, enters and relates that the famous necklace had at last found a destination; M. de Souza having purchased it for the queen of Portugal.¶ "I am very glad of it," Marie

* Mémoire pour Louis de Rohan, par Me. Target, p. 34.

† Ibid. p. 35. Deposition of Meseieurs Achet and La Porte, dans le compte rendu dece qui s'est passé au parlement, p. 69.

‡ Pièces justificatives a la suite du compte rendu, p. 18 et 19.

§ Mémoire remis a la reine le 12 aout, 1785. Pièces justificatives du compte rendu, p. 21.

|| Ibid. p. 21.

¶ Mémoires de Mademoiselle Bertin, p. 102. In this book Mademoiselle Bertin pushes attachment to Marie Antoinette to a species of worship.

Antoinette said, at once; "I am about to admit Boëhmer, and I will thank M. de Souza for having disembarassed me from the confounded necklace." These words were without doubt the ironical expression of a bitter feeling, for Boëhmer having entered, she took up a book and read several lines before speaking, as she was accustomed to do when she wished to testify her discontent; or from inexplicable caprice or feminine jealousy and secret displeasure at seeing this ornament, to which the offers and travels of Boëhmer had given an European celebrity, and which had made so much noise among queens and women, going to a foreign princess. Finally, laying aside her book, and raising a severe look to Boëhmer, she said, "I am very glad, sir, you have sold your necklace." "My necklace, Madame?" "Yes, your necklace, which M. de Souza sends to-day to Lisbon." Boëhmer having denied it, the queen gave Mademoiselle Bertin a furious look,* as if to reproach her for having alarmed her so unnecessarily. She was to receive on that day, before going to chapel, the ladies who were to be presented to her and the ambassadors. When M. de Souza appeared, she went straight up to him, contrary to etiquette, and said to him earnestly, "I inform you, M. de Souza, that you will not have the necklace; you will not have it, it is sold." M. de Souza appeared astonished. "You will not have it," she resumed in a tone of triumph; "I am sorry;" and she returned to the ladies.†

The cardinal had the necklace; he was considering how to send it to the queen. Whether he were admitted to see her or not, his interviews could be only very rare. He went to Versailles on the 1st of February, 1785. He was disguised, and Schreiber, his valet de chambre, accompanied him, carrying the precious ornament in a box. Having reached Versailles in the evening, he went to the house of Madame de la Motte, dismissing his domestic at the door, after having taken the box into his own hands, and ascends. A man is soon announced on the part of the queen. M. de Rohan retires into an half opened alcove. The stranger hands in a note, which Madame de la Motte passes to the cardinal, and which contains an order to send the box; the box was sent.‡ The messenger was a valet de chambre to the queen, named Lesclaux; and we must suppose that the cardinal knew him, when he sent, without hesitation or inquiry, and without demanding a receipt, a box which contained not less than seventeen hundred thousand livres.

It was very plain, that if Marie Antoinette received the necklace, she should have informed the negotiator of it. Madame de la Motte informed the cardinal, that on the next day, near the *Ceil-de-Bœuf*, the queen would acknowledge the reception of it by an arranged sign. This took place.§

Three days had not elapsed since the collar was sent, when M. de Rohan urged the jewellers to go and thank the queen, so fearful was he that it might perhaps be disavowed. It was a duty of which they had already acquitted themselves, without telling the cardinal that they feared

* *Memoires de Mademoiselle Bertin*, p. 103.

† *Ibid.* p. 105.

‡ *Memoire pour M. Louis de Rohan*, par Me. Target, 51.

§ An important fact avowed by the Abbé Georgel himself, t. 2, p. 65, of his *Memoires*.

to wound him by marks of distrust; they remembered that Boëhmer was at the chateau on the day of the scene with M. de Souza. In fact, Boëhmer would have been a madman, if, having facilities for seeing the queen, he had not availed himself of them immediately, to assure himself of the destination and the remission of the necklace. For after all, it should have been regarded as strange, that they should have charged a prelate, the grand almoner of France, with such a negotiation.

The affair was in this situation, when, towards the end of June, the cardinal informed the jewellers, that from a letter sent him by Madame de la Motte, the queen thought the price at first fixed excessive, and asked for a reduction of two hundred thousand livres, without which the ornament would be returned.* The surprise on the part of the jewellers was great and painful. They yielded finally. The cardinal then made them write under his dictation, and as if to conceal his responsibility, the following letter, addressed to the queen :† “Madame, we are delighted at daring to think that the last arrangements which have been proposed, and to which we have submitted with zeal and respect, are a new proof of our submission and devotion to the orders of your majesty; and we have a true satisfaction in the thought, that the handsomest diamond ornament in the world will be at the service of the greatest and best of queens.”‡

This letter, which bore date on the 12th of July, 1785, was presented by Boëhmer to the queen as she was entering her library. Madame Campan was present. The queen read the letter aloud, and instead of testifying any astonishment, instead of seeking to clear up such a mystery, approached a lighted candle, and burned the paper, saying, carelessly, “this is not worth keeping.”§

The fatal term was approaching; the hour was coming for the jewellers to address the queen, to invoke her signature. Madame de la Motte, if guilty, should tremble and think of flying into a foreign country. . . . And yet she lived at Paris in complete security, giving fêtes, planning new acquisitions in Bar-Sur-Aube, boasting more than ever her relations with the queen, and in the most entire intimacy with the cardinal.

His tranquillity was not the least diminished. He declared one day to M. de Saint James that *he had seen* seven hundred thousand livres in the hands of the queen destined for the first payment;|| and on another day Bassange having asked him if he had treated directly with the queen, he replied unhesitatingly, “Yes.”¶

The jewellers in their turn thought themselves safe, when at the expiration of the first credit, M. de Rohan sent for them, to inform them that the queen could not acquit the debt; that she would pay in the month of October, and in the mean time offered them thirty thousand livres as interest.** They were astounded, and protested, and again to

* Mémoire des Joailliers Boëhmer et Bassange, du 12 Aout, 1785.

† Ibid.

‡ Pièces justificatives à la suite du compte rendu, p. 25.

§ Mémoires de Madame de Campan, t. 2. chap. 12. p. 7.

|| Déposition de M. Saint James, Compte rendu, p. 72.

¶ Déposition de Bassange. In the *Compte-rendu*, which is made up with evident bad faith, this important deposition has been suppressed, but it is found in the *Memoir of the Advocate* opposed to Madame de la Motte, Me. Target. See *Reflexions rapides* pour M. le Cardinal de Rohan, p. 106.

** Déclarations des Sieurs Boëhmer et Bassange, du 12 Aout 1785.

avoid responsibility, the Cardinal exacted that the receipt for the thirty thousand livres should bear the name of the queen.

On the other side, in an interview which took place in the beginning of the month of August, Madame Campan having asked Boëhmer how the orders of her majesty had been transmitted to him, he replied, "By writings signed with her own hand; and I have been compelled for some time past to show them to people who have lent me money in order to quiet them.—You have not then received any thing?—Pardon me, I received a sum of thirty thousand livres in the notes of the bank of discount, which her majesty sent me by the cardinal when I gave up the necklace, and you may be very sure he saw her majesty in private, for he told me on handing me this sum that she took it in his presence from a portfolio which was kept in the secretary of Sevres porcelain in her boudoir."

The cardinal thus told St. James, Bassanges and Boëhmer that he saw Marie Antoinette, and this assurance could not have been an imposture in his mouth, those to whom he told it having every means of verifying the truth and an immense interest in doing so.

But menacing rumors were suddenly spread and reached the ears of the cardinal—the baron de Breteuil, his mortal enemy, had been informed of the negotiation; he had gone to Marie Antoinette, had spoken to her of the name of the queen as compromised by a criminal abuse—and she, surprised and violently agitated, had declared herself a stranger to what was occurring. If the cardinal had been really a victim to the manœuvre attributed to Madame de la Motte, then at least he should have been disabused. Instead, however, of going to her house like a man furious at having been duped, instead of demanding an account from her of the web which had been woven and was now exposed, instead of breaking out into reproaches, he takes her into his own house, keeps her concealed there,* and fearful that if arrested, she will unveil the secret of the correspondence, he urges her to fly across the Rhine. She certainly refused, for a few days afterwards she reached Bar-Sur-Aube with her husband, not to pass rapidly through it, but to sojourn there. There was moreover no sign of disquietude, no sorrowful forebodings. She shone in jewels and diamonds; kept open house; went out. The Duke de Penthièvre being at Chateauvillain, she went to see him, is invited to dinner, and receives a reception which astonishes her. It reached such a point on leading her out, that the prince accompanied her to the door of the second saloon, an honor he did not bestow on dutchesses, but only on princesses of the blood royal.† At Clairvaux, which she went next to visit, she was received by the abbot with the same deference and the same respect. She was supping with him and M. Beugnot, by whom these details have been preserved for us, when the door suddenly opening, the Abbé Maury, who had arrived from Paris, appeared—"What news?" he replied, "What, do you not know that the Cardinal Louis de Rohan has been arrested?" They are aston-

* Sommaire pour Madame de la Motte par Me. Doillot, p. 66. Mémoire pour Louis de Rohan par Me. Target, p. 99.

† Mémoires inédits de M. Beugnot.

ished and alarmed at those words. Madame de la Motte turns pale and leaves the room followed by M. de Beugnot, and they both return to Bar-Sur-Aube. Knowing the relations between Madame de la Motte and the cardinal, and fearful lest she might be compromised, M. Beugnot advised her to fly and offered her the means. But she replied with humor and as if touched only by the dangers of the cardinal, that she was nobody in this matter.* Her husband was so tranquil, that when she arrived he was absent, having gone on a hunting party that same morning.

The Abbé Maury told the truth, the Cardinal de Rohan had been arrested. It is known how tragical this scene was. The 15th of August, 1785, Assumption day, had been chosen by the implacable enmity of the Baron de Breteuil. The court was about to go to the chapel. The grand almoner was there clothed in his sacerdotal robes. He was suddenly called into the cabinet of the king. He enters and finds himself in the presence of Louis the Sixteenth, Marie Antoinette, the keeper of the seals, the Baron de Breteuil.—“What is this,” said the king to him, “about a necklace you have procured for the queen?” This question, which he was so far from suspecting, was a thunderbolt to the cardinal. Surprised, troubled, lost, he stammered out, that he had been deceived. The queen having then asked him how that was possible, he, without replying to her,† but addressing himself to the king, protested his ignorance. Some relate that seeing the queen speak, he gave her a disrespectful,‡ indignant and reproachful look. Authorized by Louis the Sixteenth to retire into an adjoining apartment to write his justification, he learned on re-entering that he was about to be arrested. “Ah, Sire,” he then exclaimed, “I shall always obey the orders of your majesty, but deign to spare me the disgrace of being arrested in my pontifical garments and before the eyes of the whole court.” “It must be so,” replied Louis the Sixteenth. In fact at the moment when he left the king’s presence, the cry was heard, “arrest the cardinal.” It was de Breteuil, who usurping the employment of the captain of the guards of the quarter, gave course to the impatience of his hatred. The custody of the cardinal was at once confided to a young lieutenant of the guards. As they were passing through the gallery together M. de Rohan meets his heiduque, addresses some words to him in German, and asking the officer for a pencil, traces rapidly on a piece of paper some lines which the servant carries off. The latter hastened to Paris at speed, and reached the cardinal’s palace in so short a time, that the horse fell dead at the stable. The order contained in the paper was handed to the abbé Georgel and the portfolio containing his correspondence was soon beyond the reach of search.§ The searches, so imperiously demanded by the circumstances, did not take place for four hours afterwards; an astonishing thing, observes M. de Besenval.|| Were they afraid of knowing

* *Mémoires inédits de M. Beugnot.*

† In accordance with the testimony of M. de Besenval who assures us he had the details which he relates from the queen herself. See t. 2. of his *Mémoires*, p. 164 et 165.

‡ *Mémoires de l’abbé Georgel*, t. 2. p. 102.

§ *Ibid.* p. 104.

|| *Ibid.* p. 166.

too much? M. de Rohan was conducted to the Bastille that same night.

There was at first but one feeling in Paris; stupefaction. But when it was known that the king had offered the accused the alternative either of throwing himself on the royal mercy, or of being judged by Parliament, and that he had determined on the latter, the public emotion was divided, and the diversity of interests was manifested by the consternation, distrust, a thousand contradictory and vehement commentaries.

The parliament triumphed. It at last saw a prince of the church humbled before it in the person of a cardinal, and the proudest families in the kingdom held in expectation, in terror of its judgments. It was about to decide on the honor of the king. On their side, and by a contrary feeling, the leaders of the nobility were struck down. They measured with rage the road already traversed by these bourgeois in red robes, and they broke out against the queen, by whom one of their number was given up to the sarcasms of the multitude. Great was also the consternation of the high clergy, as appears by its protest of the 18th of September, 1785. Mere clerks had special judges pointed out by law, and could not the episcopal order, whose rights so many historical monuments consecrated, claim the same privilege? An accused bishop could not, should not be judged but by bishops. Such were the pretensions which the ecclesiastical aristocracy raised;* and the pope threatened to degrade M. de Rohan for not having declined the jurisdiction of parliament in an absolute and formal manner. Those who professed a reflected worship for the monarchical principle, could not rid themselves of an impression of alarm. Had they not a vague presentiment of the 5th and 6th of October? How should they not have been disturbed by a trial which was about to introduce the imagination of the people into the alcove of the queen? They blamed Louis the Sixteenth, they accused him of imprudence. But he had to submit to a law which was independent of the calculations of human wisdom. For the Revolution was already made.

That which it was impossible to prevent, was the exposure of the 15th of August. Why was it not done? Why did the queen expose herself to the danger of pushing to extremities the man from whom she had so much to fear? That is surprising at first glance; but when we take in the whole of the circumstances, the astonishment ceases. M. de Breteuil was at the head of the police. He cherished towards Louis de Rohan, his fortunate successor in the embassy to Vienna, a hatred which bordered on phrenzy. It was he who desired the disgrace of the arrest. In a less compromised situation, no one doubts but that Marie Antoinette would have been in a situation to hinder it all. But the more she was mixed up in the affair, the less was she permitted to stifle the noise of it, under penalty of awakening terrible suspicions. She need not dread the despair of the accused; his own interest answered for his discretion; for a single word from him as to his secret relations with the wife of the

* Letter sent to the king on the 18th of September, 1785.

king, and he was dead. We add, also, that the cardinal had recently abandoned himself to new and culpable boasting. Marie Antoinette had doubtless heard this, and felt her old wounds re-open.

Madame de la Motte was arrested at Bar-sur-Aube on the 18th of August, 1785. She had already burned her papers, among which were several letters from the cardinal, filled with voluptuous boldness, and in which the transports of ambition were united with the delirium of love.* Cagliostro was also arrested on the denunciation of Madame de la Motte, who suspected him of having done her ill offices with M. de Rohan, and who avenged herself by a calumny out of which an unjust decree might make an assassination. It must be remarked that M. de la Motte, having placed himself in the hands of the agents of authority, they refused to seize his person.† They knew him to be of a decided character, and were fearful lest he might defend his wife against the influences to which they were disposed to submit her.

She was in fact no sooner in the Bastille than the Baron de Breteuil enveloped her in a system of artificial counsels, calculated for the purpose of absolving the queen and destroying the cardinal. They informed her, through the commissioner Chenon,‡ that her days were ended if she named one person who was inviolable; that there was but one part for her, to throw every thing on the cardinal; that he did not deserve regard, having denounced her. "Do you not see," added the commissioner, "that he himself has condemned himself to abstain from accusing the queen? You must either then crush him or be crushed by him."

It was thus that Madame de la Motte was led to falsehood at the expense of the cardinal, who on his side felt he was lost, if he did not lie at her expense. There is the key of the trial. It remained covered with an impenetrable obscurity, because, in order to dissipate it, it would have been necessary to pronounce a name which the judges could not hear pronounced.

The pursuits had commenced, they led to three important discoveries.

A young girl, named d'Oliva, was arrested at Brussels, who declared that it was she who had personified the queen in the Park, in accordance with the suggestions of Madame de la Motte.

A certain Rétaux de Villette avowed himself guilty of having, at the instigation and in the presence of Madame de la Motte, counterfeited the signature of the queen, and written on the margin of the propositions made to the jeweller, these words, *approved, Marie Antoinette, of France.*

Finally, they learned from an Irish capuchin, Mac Dermott, that M. de la Motte had sold diamonds to a jeweller in London, named Gray, to the value of ten thousand pounds sterling; this was confirmed by the deposition of Gray, who was interrogated through the French chargé in London.§

These three circumstances appeared overwhelming for Madame de la

* *Mémoires inédits de M. Beugnot.*

† *Mémoire justificatif de Madame de la Motte*, p. 127

‡ *Vie de Madame de la Motte.*

§ Declaration of Jeweller Gray, certified by the notary, J. P. Dubourg.

Motte. She thus explained them, at first in the secret interrogatories to which she was subjected in the Bastille; and then in the writings which appeared after the judgment.

On the subject of the scene in the park, she maintained that Oliva had there personified the queen; but that Marie Antoinette had so wished it; that she assisted at the rendezvous, concealed behind a hedge of hornbeam; that she had herself prepared an adventure whose singularity pleased her, and whose end was to prove the discretion of the cardinal. How can it be believed, she exclaimed, that I should have dared, without the knowledge of the queen, to weave a web so easy to break? That I should have chosen the garden of Versailles, at midnight, to commit the crime of lese majesty, at a time when nocturnal promenades, too much permitted in 1778, were prohibited, and when the royal residences, on the contrary, were closely watched? But how! if that love of the queen with which the soul of the cardinal was flattered, had been but an invention on my part, would I not have been interested in prolonging his error, in putting it to sleep, instead of conducting him to a fraudulent rendezvous, which was to exalt his hopes and make him discover the intrigue, by inspiring him with confidence to approach the queen on the next day, to speak to her of love, in fine, to continue so successful an adventure? For a first rendezvous called for a second and a third; and an interview with the false queen was advancing the time of verbal explanation with the true one, a decisive hour, in which a syllable would have been enough to expose me entirely, and precipitate me into an abyss.

Madame de la Motte formally admitted that the words, *approved, Marie Antoinette of France*, had been written by Retaux de Vilette; but she added that it was with the express consent of the queen and the cardinal. They had adopted this expedient in concert, judging it useful and but little dangerous. The signature, Marie Antoinette of France, being that of no one, could not constitute a forgery; it had then the advantage of determining Boëhmer to give up the necklace, without compromising either the queen or the chosen secretary. In support of this explanation, Madame de la Motte pointed out how strange it would have been for an old ambassador, a courtier, not to know how the queen signed her name, from whom, in his capacity of grand almoner, he had received written orders. Would he not have been shocked at seeing the words of *France*, added to the signature of a princess of *Austria*? It was, moreover, impossible to suppose too rapid a reading or the distraction of the moment; since the agreement had remained in his hands, he had had occasion to read it over several times, and had even shown it to the treasurer, St. James.

Madame de la Motte also declared that she had received the diamonds which had been sold in London, by her husband, as presents from Marie Antoinette. The wife of Louis the Sixteenth being unable to wear this famous necklace which she had already refused from the king as it was, it became necessary to take it to pieces, so as to have it reset in a less recognizable form, and of a different design. In this case, there were too many diamonds. It was necessary to give them to somebody, and it was natural they should be given to her who was the mistress of the secret.

As may be imagined, these allegations of Madame de la Motte were not permitted to figure in the proceedings. They transpired, however, and acquired weight from the difficulty, the impossibility of understanding, if they were rejected, a crowd of certain, incontestable facts, which the memorials of the advocates and the official documents surrendered to public discussion.

Public opinion was then divided.

The partisans of Marie Antoinette indignantly accused Madame de la Motte, of having, whilst calumniating her sovereign, abused the credulity of the cardinal. The credit of Madame de la Motte at court? It was a falsehood. The letters handed by her to the Prince de Rohan? supposititious. The bargain of the necklace? a well calculated robbery. And they showed her at once deceiving the cardinal in the park scene, borrowing the venal skill of a forger, selling at London, through her husband, diamonds detached from the necklace, and passing from well known poverty to ostentatious wealth. They recalled, also, that Marie Antoinette had always testified an aversion towards the Prince Louis de Rohan, which it was impossible to reconcile with secret and intimate connections; they also recalled that this very necklace, which the Queen of France was accused of purchasing clandestinely, had been twice offered to her and twice refused.

But the opposite party opposed other considerations to these, which they thought much more conclusive.

And first, was it conceivable that in receiving love letters, true or supposititious; that in receiving in the park scene a pledge of tenderness, thought to be offered by the queen herself; that, in fine, believing himself to be loved, the cardinal would not have sought to extend his success, at least to verify it? Would not he who had access to the chateau, and so frequently met Marie Antoinette in passing, have never made a sign, said a word having reference to the letters, to a recollection which was the occupation of his thoughts and the enchantment of his life? Was more than a sign or a word required to unveil the intrigue attributed to Madame de la Motte? Had the cardinal, under the impression that he had received letters, have spoken to the queen, he would certainly have done it; and since the secret correspondence had been carried on for a year, it might be inferred, that Madame de la Motte spoke the truth.

And then, what is to be thought of the silence kept by the queen, when, on the 12th of July, she received that letter from the jewellers, in which they spoke of a necklace sold in compliance with her order, of new arrangements entered into, of submission to her wishes, of gratitude? If she had been ignorant of every thing, would she not have sent at once for Boëhmer, with whom she was in communication, to question him about so insolent an enigma?

Another circumstance with which they armed themselves against Marie Antoinette was the reduction of the two hundred thousand livres, exacted from the jewellers on the first payment, in a letter sent by her usual messenger.* If it were true that Madame de la Motte had deceived the

* *Memoire des Joailliers Boëhmer et Bassange, du 12 Aout, 1786.*

cardinal and appropriated the diamonds to herself, for what purpose would she have provoked, by means of a forged letter, a reduction which might, by leading to the rescinding of the bargain, have forced her to restore the object of her robbery, to unmask herself, to destroy herself hopelessly? This letter, which the cardinal stated he had received from the queen, could not then have been forged by Madame de la Motte, and yet it was a consequent to the preceding ones, and was in the same hand.

Thus spoke the enemies of Marie Antoinette, and to each objection they sought a reply, either in the proceedings or in the character and habits of the princess. They doubtless found difficulty in picturing to themselves the wife of the King of France concealed behind a hedge, and being the associate of a foolish adventure; but then, was not the life of Marie Antoinette full of imprudent caprices, and had not the part of Rosina, in the Barber of Seville, which she loved to play in the idleness of the Petit Trianon,* familiarized her with scenes resembling those of the grove? She had been very much irritated against the cardinal; but could not this anger, sprung from a particular fact and susceptible of explanation, be extinguished before the love of Prince Louis, and the testimonies of his repentance? She had twice refused the necklace; but the state of the finances was then a law to her; and those who knew the heart of women should not have been surprised that she had been afterwards seized with a violent desire to have it, when she learned that it was about to pass into the hands of a princess of a rank inferior to her own. As to Madame de la Motte, were not her opulence, which was owing to the largesses of the cardinal and which was exhibited nine months before the negotiation for the necklace, the distrust with which she had inspired the jewellers on mentioning the intentions of the Prince de Rohan, the noise which she made about her relations with the queen, her profound security to the last moment, her absolute refusal to fly when the means were offered her, the assurance that she had not ceased for a moment to show, sufficient to give the lie to the hypothesis of the robbery?

It is a misfortune for power, when the hatred it excites is encouraged by its decline which is commencing. The trial about the necklace exposed royalty to blows, not only from its natural enemies, but from a crowd of royalists, whom the resentment of deceived ambition or some recent injury animated. They had a fair opportunity to envelope the affair in clouds, to mix it up with the design of a ridiculous, knavish adventure, in which a certain Bette d'Etienneville was commissioned to blind public curiosity; looks remained fixed on the throne and Versailles. The royal majesty, banished from the proceedings, was dragged about in impure lampoons, in which the rancors of courtiers were recognized, their names only being wanting. The scandal was enormous in France, throughout all Europe; the trial about the necklace became a frame in which a thousand accusations against the Queen were collected, and many applauded what they called the dishonor of the king, whilst awaiting the fall of the royalty.

* *Mémoires de Madame Campan, aux Eclaircissements historiques*, t. 2, p. 270.

It was also fatal to the queen, that the question was between her and the highest family in the kingdom.

To put the Prince de Rohan out of the cause was impossible; thus Me. Target, his advocate was reduced in defending him, to attribute to him a credulity which would scarcely have been truth-like in a child. And even that served for nothing; for it remained for him to explain what the cardinal had said to Boëhmer, Bassange and St. James, about his direct intercourse with the queen, and the asylum which he had granted to Madame de la Motte at the moment of the fatal eclat, and finally the following note dictated by him at an early stage of the affair to his valet de chambre, and which had fallen into the hands of the Baron de Breteuil: "Seek out B. (Boëhmer,) a second time . . . it is for him to speak again of what was said the first time about the plan in question . . . his head has turned since A. (the queen) said, 'What do these people wish to say? I believe they are crazy.' I fear much lest mine is turned also."

Louis de Rohan had a lively and cultivated mind, he had managed diplomatic affairs with a rare dexterity, and his embassy at Vienna had procured the greatest distinction for him.* . . . That such a man become the sport of a vulgar intriguer, should have thought he saw for several consecutive months, that which he did not see, should have heard that which was not said to him, that manifestations of hatred should have been changed for him and him alone into manifestations of love, that he should have been retained in a long and voluntary ignorance of that which he had a capital and pressing interest in knowing, that without inspiring in him any distrust, he should have been drawn successively to a false rendezvous, brought into the presence of a false queen, and been induced to commit to a false valet de chambre, a necklace purchased on the faith of a false signature, was what the public refused to believe.

But if he had not been deceived, one of two things was necessary; he had either purchased the necklace to appropriate it to himself, or else he had acquired it in the name and by the express orders of Marie Antoinette. A terrible and yet inevitable alternative.

It resulted from the proceedings, and the declaration of the two jewellers, that the letter of the 12th of July, in which they thanked the queen for having finally consented to the purchase of the necklace, had been suggested and *dictated* by the cardinal himself: an invincible argument in favor of his good faith, and evident proof, they said, that he acted really under the eye of the queen.

The question finally reached this point, that the acquittal of the cardinal could not be regarded otherwise than as a condemnation of the queen.

Two parties were then formed; on one side Louis the Sixteenth, the

* See in the *Mémoires de l'Abbé Georgel*, and in the *mémoires historiques et politiques du règne de Louis Seizieme*, the details of the important discoveries made at Vienna by Louis de Rohan, and the secret information he obtained in the bureau of the Prince de Kauntz, and even in the apartments of the Empress.

† *Mémoire des joailliers de Boëhmer et Bassange*, ubi supra.

queen, the first president d'Aligre, the two reporters, Titon de Villotran et Dupuis de Marcé, the councillor d'Amécourt, M. de Bretuil; on the other, the grand almoner, the family of Rohan, the bishops, a large portion of the magistracy, and secretly M. de Vergennes.

What would be the issue? the name of Madame de la Motte had almost disappeared in the scandalous importance of the quarrel. What interested all, was the queen, what some, the monarchy.

The confronting of the witnesses commenced. Madame de la Motte displayed in it an audacity and violence which the modesty of her sex condemned, but which testified this conviction in her, that they were not in a condition to strike her, that they would never dare it. The cardinal could not meet her look, she made Father Lotu, one of the witnesses, blush, intimidated Villette, and alarmed the judges by her excitement. Faithful moreover to the plan of defence which had been marked out for her, she studied visibly to separate the queen's name from her replies. Vain efforts! the fatal name rose every instant to her lips; and then forced to substitute a fable, which was frequently absurd, for the true explanation, she stopped and became embarrassed by her contradictions and falsehoods. More than once, irritated at so much constraint, and pressed too actively, she allowed exclamations to escape which chilled the tribunal with alarm. "Let them be careful! let them not push me too far, I will speak." She allowed it to escape from her one day in speaking of a letter to the cardinal, that this letter was from Marie Antoinette, and began with these words; *I send thee*.

The accused during this time were publishing memoirs on memoirs, Cagliostro issued his from the Bastille. He gave a thousand romantic details in it, about his education, his life, and his travels, evidently invented for the purpose of preserving the empire which he exercised over the imagination; he had passed his childhood at Medina, by the name of Archarat, in the palace of the Mufti Salahym. His teacher was named Althotas. His birth was an enigma to himself, etc. . . A list of persons whom he had known intimately in different countries of Europe followed; in Spain, the Duke of Alba and his son the Duke of Vescard, the Count de Prelata, the Duke de Medina Cœli; in Portugal, the Count de San Vicenti; in Holland, the Duke of Brunswick; at Petersburg, Prince Potemkin, Narischin, the general of the Cossacks, General Médicino; in Poland, the Countess Comceska, the Princess of Nassau; at Rome, the Chevalier d'Acquino; at Malta, the Grand Master. In the same writing he stated that there were bankers in various parts of Europe instructed to provide for his support and his largesses; he named several who did not deny it; Sarrasin of Bâle, Sancostar of Lyons, Ansemo la Cruz of Lisbon. After having confounded with disdainful moderation the calumnies of Madame de la Motte, so far as they concerned him, and proved his innocence in the affair of the necklace, "I have written, he said in conclusion, what is sufficient for the law, what is sufficient for any other feeling than that of a vain curiosity. Will you insist on knowing more particularly the country, name, motives, resources of an unknown? What does it concern you Frenchmen? My country is for you, the first place

in your empire in which I submitted myself to your laws ; my name is that which I have caused to be honored among you ; my motive is God ; my resources are my own secret."

This memoir, in which some grandeur was mingled with vulgar artifices, increased the number of partisans which philosophical free-masonry, represented by Cagliostro, numbered in France. Mirabeau attacked him from Berlin in a bitter pamphlet, but which shows the popularity of the wonder-worker at that period. "Public pity," says Mirabeau,* "appears to embrace his defence, or at least to embellish it. He is a prodigious man, a benefactor of mankind, a philosopher, a sage, who is about to renew the horrible drama of Socrates drinking hemlock. A thousand cries arise, and from these confused clamors we may gather these words : *"What has he done ? . . . What has his wife done ? . . . What have they done ?"*

The news was suddenly spread abroad, accredited by a memorial of Me. Doillot,† that the Count de la Motte is in England, that he knows the truth, is determined to tell it, is anxious to reach Paris, and is opposed in so doing. To this vague recital were added an attempt at assassination, which had failed, and many a story propagated by hatred. Clamors then arose. Why did they not hasten to bring the only man who could perhaps throw any light on so many mysteries ? M. de Vergennes had known well how to arrest in foreign countries Oliva and Villette, who were favorable to M. de Rohan ; why was he now so lukewarm and powerless towards M. de la Motte, a witness whom the cardinal dreaded. These remarks did not move Vergennes, well determined to sustain the Rohans, from friendship to them, and also from animosity to the queen. He sustained himself on the respect due to the law of nations, a respect which had not restrained him either at Brussels or Geneva ; he only demanded as a matter of form the surrender of M. de la Motte by the British government, and he followed to the end the system which caused him to reject the following proposals of Le Mercier, a French spy in England ; "If address was not sufficient to seize him, force will be employed to conduct him to the banks of the Thames, to an isolated spot, where they would be careful to have stationed, for fifteen days if necessary, one of those vessels which carry coal to London. They are of such thickness, that it would be impossible for any one confined in the hold to make his cries heard."‡

It was for the interest of the queen that Count de la Motte should appear, provided he would pledge himself to associate himself against the cardinal exclusively in the plan of defence suggested to his wife. Would he consent to make such an engagement ? M. d'Adhemar, the ambassador of France in England, was commissioned to assure himself of this. For although M. de Vergennes, his superior, belonged to what was then called *the party of the Rohans*, he was a member of the *queen's party*. He then saw M. de la Motte, pointed out to him the path to be

* Lettre du Comte de Mirabeau a M. M . . . about Cagliostro and Lavater.

† Sommaire pour la Comtesse de Valois la Motte par Me. Doillot, p. 58.

‡ Report of September, 1786, found in the archives of the police.

pursued,* and was preparing to send him to France, when the denouement, hurried by the friends of the cardinal, happened.

Contrary influences were, for a long time, brought to bear on parliament, the master of the decision. Baldheaded counsellors underwent solicitations, whose charm is divined and not avowed.† Ambitious souls were leaning to the side of favor. The impatience of the public was at its height. The attorney general gave his conclusions.

They were, that Villette and M. de la Motte should be condemned to the galleys for life; that Madame de la Motte should be whipped, branded and confined in an hospital for the rest of her life. By the same conclusions Oliva was nonsuited and Cagliostro discharged from the accusation, and the cardinal should be forced to an humiliating avowal of temerity, banished forever from the presence of the king and queen, deprived of his posts and his dignities.‡ The opinion of the attorney general was sustained by the two judges advocate and M. d'Amécourt, adopted by the fourteen counsellors and actively opposed in every thing concerning the cardinal by Mess. Minières, Fréteau, Robert de Saint Vincent, de Brétignières, Barillon, de Jonville. M. d'Ormesson thought that without being discharged from the accusation, M. de Rohan should be nonsuited.

The accused were to be submitted to a final interrogatory, before the decree was pronounced. Villette appeared first upon the prisoner's stool, his eyes bathed in tears, and he only spoke to protest his repentance. Madame de la Motte was then brought in. She advanced in a simple dress with her hair unpowdered and with a firm step; but at the sight of the opprobrious seat which was destined for her, her countenance altered and her knees trembled. She recovered herself, however, and replied with assurance; and it was remarked that on rising to retire she smiled. The attitude of the cardinal was very different. Though the prisoner's stool had disappeared when he entered, his face was extremely pale, and consternation was painted in his looks.§ He wore a long robe of ceremony. Invited unanimously to take a seat, he assumed the air and language of a suppliant and left a profound impression of pity on the hearts of his judges.

The 31st of May, 1786, being the day on which the decision was to be pronounced, the members of the families of Rohan and Lorraine went at half past four in the morning to range themselves on the passage of the magistrates. All, men and women, wore mourning, and when the parliament passed by, they contented themselves with beseeching them by their sad countenance and their silence. The hour finally came; Prince Louis de Rohan was discharged from the accusation.

There was a true delirium in Paris at this news. Since they acquitted the cardinal, the queen was humiliated, the court condemned, the monarchical principle freely controlled by high burgherism, the revolu-

* *Mémoire justificatif de la Countess de Valois La Motte*, p. 156. This work should be read with distrust. Dictated by an excess of resentment, it is full of gall and is calumnious. But it contains, mixed up with many falsehoods, assertions perfectly true and in conformity with the ensemble of the proof on the trial.

† *Mémoires de Madame Campan*, t. 2. *Aux Eclaircissements historiques*, p. 291.

‡ *Compte Rendu*, p. 112 et 113.

§ *Ibid.* p. 117.

tionary spirit was satisfied. Louis de Rohan, who until then had never been popular, even for his vices, became suddenly the idol of the people. The palace was overflowed by the people, some inundating the way by which the magistrates were to pass, others pushing and pressing by the side of the bailiffs. When the president and counsellors came out, a thousand shouts were heard, "Huzza for the parliament. Huzza for the cardinal." The women of the market hurried before the judges with their mouths full of gratitude and their hands of bouquets. No one cared about Villette, struck with perpetual banishment, nor De la Motte, condemned to the galleys for contumacy, nor finally Madame de la Motte, reserved for a punishment worse than death. All thoughts were for the cardinal. When he got into the carriage which was to reconduct him provisionally to the Bastille, they were seen disputing for the honor of kissing his garments. Cagliostro shared in these popular ovations, and the highest families applauded at such a sight, as at a triumph. It was the triumph of the spirit of the revolution.

The queen was overwhelmed with grief; Louis the Sixteenth expressed loudly the opinion that Louis de Rohan had committed a robbery, and by an arbitrary act, whose tardy éclat filled the measure of his faults, he exiled him. Though innocent and acquitted, Cagliostro was in his turn banished from the kingdom.

Madame de la Motte, on learning her fate, fell into an inexpressible fit of fury. Whilst her sentence was reading to her, they were obliged to hold her by force in the air, no one being able, by violence, to place her on her knees. Bound with cords and dragged into the hall of the palace of justice, she uttered cries, not of alarm, but fury. Addressing herself to the people, she said, "If they treat the blood of the Valois so, what fate is reserved for that of the Bourbons?" And in the midst of the groans which indignation wrenched from her, they heard these characteristic words, "It is my own fault if I undergo this ignominy; I had but to say one word and I was hung." According to Lally-Tolendal they then placed a gag in her mouth, and as she struggled with despair in the hands of the executioner, the iron which was to brand her on the shoulder, branded her on her breast. They carried her to Salpêtrière, with her hair dishevelled, her face covered with blood, and exhaling the strength still left her, in imprecations.

Sometime afterwards, the Princess de Lamballe went mysteriously to Salpêtrière, under pretence of curiosity; but in reality to inquire after Madame de la Motte and to give assistance for her to the superior.*

Towards the close of November, 1786, a sentinel on guard in the court of la Salpêtrière, passed one night a note without a signature to the woman who attended on Madame de la Motte. They said in it to the prisoner, "You are exhorted not to lose courage and to husband your strength for a long journey; we are engaged in the means of changing your fate." Another note also sent through the sentinel asked for a plan of the key necessary to facilitate her escape. The plan was given up, and the unknown soldier carried some time afterwards the liberating

key, as well as a man's clothes which Madame de la Motte could easily put on, the order having without doubt been secretly given to the superior. Thus restored to liberty, Madame de la Motte started for London where her husband awaited her.

She did not doubt that she owed her escape to the queen, but this conviction was far from having calmed her resentment; thus the following announcement was read in an English journal about the beginning of the year 1787:—"It is rumored in the saloons of London, that an important publication is about to appear, which will throw light on the affair of the necklace."

The news, soon repeated by the newspapers of Paris, reaches the court and causes trouble there. Marie Antoinette is alarmed. A negotiation is opened with M. de la Motte for the suppression of the announced writing; they talk about honor; M. de la Motte consents to talk about money, and pressed by the queen, at the instigation of the king, the Princess Polignac went to Bath, where two hundred thousand livres were paid for a silence which was not kept.

Such was this celebrated and so long obscure event. An evil impression against Marie Antoinette was left in the different courts of Europe, so that even her nephew, the Emperor Francis the Second, thought her half guilty.* It is said that after the decree of the 31st of May, 1786, the attorney general said to M. Robert de Saint Vincent, one of the most ardent defenders of the cardinal, "Sir, without wishing to do so, you are shaking the foundations of the monarchy." This was going too far. The foundations of a solidly constructed monarchy are not so easily shaken; it requires the labor of ages and the gnawing flood of ideas. And yet among the secondary causes of the revolution this was certainly the most stirring and the most active. The dissoluteness of courts, the miseries of grandeur, the fortune of countries undermined by excessive egotism and baseness, disorder in the working of power, the immolation of the rights of truth to the interests of force, hatreds slowly amassed in the hearts of the people, the impotence of royalty, when it is declining, to raise itself up by justice, or to maintain itself by arbitrary proceedings; in a word, the affair of the necklace collected, summed up and placed in relief every thing which accuses the vices of monarchical institutions. And what a chastisement inflicted on the pride of the masters of the earth, what a sight of a throne on which Louis the Fourteenth had been seated, compromised and dragged into the complications of an intrigue of a farce.

* *Mémoires de Mademoiselle Bertin*, p. 137.

CHAPTER V.

APPEARANCE OF THE DEFICIT.

Calonne; his portrait and plans—Singular and systematic character of his follies—Why he makes the courtiers his accomplices—Strange illusions of the Court—Largesses calculated by Calonne; his operations; recoinage of the gold coin—The notables are suddenly convened—Appearance of the Deficit—Attitude of the notables and their manœuvres—Calonne attacked on all sides, after having proclaimed war on abuses—What there was great in this apparent inconsistency of opinion—Fall and departure of Calonne—Exile of Necker.

WHILST the affair of the necklace was glittering in scandals, another theatrical blow, no less fatal to the monarchy, was preparing; the appearance of the deficit.

The diplomacy of a mistress had pushed M. de Calonne, an amiable and dangerous person, into the finances, who under an appearance of frivolity, concealed the penetration of a statesman. Deceived beyond doubt, by externals, the historians of his own time and of ours have seen in Calonne only a daring gambler, a madcap capable of treating the finances as the marquises of that day did women and virtue, with the lightness of a successful gallant, the courtesy of a gentleman and the incredulity of a free thinker.* They do not appear to distrust, that his conduct, instead of being dictated by chance, was the result of an active and prompt calculation. It has escaped them that his follies were systematic and were connected in the order he desired.

Calonne had discerned that the monarchy was struck with a mortal blow; that it was sustained by a *kind of artifice*† and that to save it, if its safety were still possible, one mode was offered, to reform every thing, to remake every thing, and according to his own expression, *to under-build the whole building*.‡

But how was this to be done? Here it was that Calonne displayed originality and clear-sightedness. His plan was strange and characteristic of the situation.

The reform of the monarchy being necessary, the great bodies must be led to consent to it, almost to wish it, and for that purpose he must make himself their accomplice, divide the remains of the treasury magnificently and gracefully with them, seduce, gorge and lead them laughing to the very borders of an abyss which he would suddenly show them, so alarming, so profound, that king, nobility and clergy would be compelled to call of their own accord for liberating novelties.

* Monthyon, *Particularités sur les ministres des finances*, p. 277.

† *Mémoire remis au Roi*, par M. de Calonne, dans *Soulavie*, t. 6, ch. 7.

‡ *Rapport de M. de Calonne au Roi*.

When an austere plebeian, a Genevese burgher, Necker had spoken to so many lofty gentlemen about descending to the level of the third estate, resigning themselves to equality in taxation, about retrenchments in pensions, and the restoration of the mortgaged domains, he had evidently alienated the nobility, and irritated the privileged class, by threatening them in the name of the common right. But that he, Calonne, the friend of feasts and pleasures, the courtier, the elegant, without rigidity, without haughtiness, and as vicious as his neighbors, should one day remand the complete remodelling of the state, would certainly not be suspected, and he might say to the privileged classes, after having procured a pleasant revery for them; the finances are now at an end; the feast is devoured; you must pay or perish.

Such were the combinations of Calonne. Like those physicians who, to heal a sickness, make it pass from the chronic to the active stage, Calonne, instead of combating the egotism of the high classes, wished to encourage it, to urge it to madness, being very sure that the time would come when these same classes would submit to the common fate from necessity, from interest, from fear.

It was not because principles were dear to him, and that he had the patriotism of a Colbert or the morality of a Sully. So much virtue did not enter this light soul. He was intelligent; that was all. We must add, that his character was marvellously adapted to the nature of his plans. To borrow, to have millions, to spend them, to dazzle, nothing was more in harmony with the temperament of an agreeable debauchee. Calonne set to work, and he went right of his end, which was not as has been thought, to snatch a moment of happiness for the great, but to intoxicate them, in order to subject them.*

And what other path could he follow? Economize? In opening the royal treasury, where he found, he said, but two sacs of twelve hundred livres,† he could not be mistaken as the artifices of the *statement*. Necker not only could not have converted the deficit left by Cluguy into an excess of revenue of ten millions, but it was even impossible for him to have filled up the old gap, having had to support the enormous burthen of the American war. Fleury and d'Ormesson, the successors of Necker, had added new loans to the five hundred and twenty millions‡ borrowed by him. Fleury had drawn but twenty-five millions from the tax of new sous on the livre, and the third vingtième had furnished d'Ormesson with only twenty-one millions.

Deducting the forty-five millions just mentioned, the deficit had then inevitably increased during the two ministries of d'Ormesson and Fleury.

Calonne must then regard economy as an insufficient resource, as a used up expedient. It only remained for him to increase the danger in some way, so as to impose extreme resolutions on those who surrounded the law.

As a debut, he opened a loan of an hundred millions.§ What favors,

* To be convinced of this, we have only to meditate on le mémoire de Calonne au Roi:
† Mémoire de Calonne.

‡ In a little book without a title, in reply to Calonne, Necker carries the total of his loans to five hundred and thirty millions, comprising in it forty millions of anticipations.

§ Edict of the month of November.

graces, largesses began to shower upon the wondering courtiers. The *croupes*, the interests in the farmings and the excises were restored. Life pensions were given to those who had none, and perpetual pensions to those who had life. The comptroller general of the finances received solicitors with open arms, and sent them away with full hands; and some even saw their desires surpassed. All Paris knew that one day Calonne had sent pistachio nuts wrapped in the notes of the bank of discount to certain ladies.* Complaisance was erected into a system, and the last means of government used by the French monarchy was folly.

Personal seductions were moreover united in Calonne with his power as a placeman. His lofty stature, his easy carriage, his grace, the mobility of his agreeable and fine figure† contributed to gain the great world for him. Courtiers repeated his bon-mots, finding the more wit in them, since he made sport of economy, and railed at the creditors of the state, almost as much as at his own. He had however the art and the care to pay his own debts through Louis the Sixteenth, to whom he avowed on the first day private debts to the amount of two hundred thousand livres. The king, without saying any thing, took this sum from his secretary, and handed it to the new minister; a faithful image of the manner in which the finances were about to be administered.

There is one feature which paints the spirit of the court; it is, that the equivocal reputation of Calonne served him even better than his smiling promises, and the extent of his presumed talents could have done. Fleury and d'Ormesson had left the ministry, the last especially, with an equal renown for insufficiency and integrity. In seeing incapacity united with correctness, men had become accustomed to confound them; the courtiers at least affected to believe them inseparable;‡ and in the eyes of those who said, with a smile on their lips, *God keep us from honest men*, an administrator not burthened with scruples, appeared to be easily superior.

The truth is, the prodigalities of Calonne and his imperturbable serenity imposed on capitalists who were seeking besides for prime investments, and the confidence which Necker had merited by his economy, Calonne obtained by his expenses. The consequences? He did not trouble himself about them, having foreseen them. Thus, he used his loans without husbanding them, without foresight, and as if this resource cost nothing. Necker had borrowed during the war, he borrowed in peace. Having entered the ministry in November, 1783, he had opened in December, as we have seen, a first loan of

-	-	-	-	100,000,000 livres.
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The next year he borrowed	-	-	-	125,000,000
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The year after	-	-	-	80,000,000
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But whilst he was himself receiving the amount of these loans, he was borrowing besides, on account of the king, by the estates of Languedoc, and maritime Flanders and the city of Paris

-	-	-	49,000,000
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* M. de Calonne tout entier par M. C. . . (Carra) Brussels, 1788.

† Monthyon, Particularités sur les Ministres de finances, p. 277.

‡ Fragment of a manuscript letter upon the assembly of the notables, in the correspondence de Grimm, Novembre, 1788.

By means of a furtive extension of old loans opened in 1781-2, and even in 1770 he obtained	122,900,000 livres.
He increased the securities for farming the excises, etc.	14,600,000
He created new charges for	10,000,000
He secretly forced the discount bank to propose itself a loan for eighty millions which he had the moderation to reduce publicly to	70,000,000
He increased the anticipations by	79,000,000

Showing loans and extraordinary resources of - 650,000,000 livres, which were to cost an annual interest of* 45,420,000 livres. With these resources Calonne paid pressing debts, and gave free course to his plan of first re-assuring the nation. Every new edict took the form of a promise. The preambles said, that the embarrassments of the treasury were about terminating; light and order were about to appear in our finances,† and how could it be doubted? It was Louis the Sixteenth who appeared to give his royal word for it; it was he who showed to France fortunate perspectives. After all did not this so much calumniated treasury work marvels? An hundred and thirty-six millions were spent in cash, in 1785.‡ Scarcely had they purchased Rambouillet for the king, paying forty millions therefor, when they hastened to purchase Saint Cloud for the queen for fifteen millions.§ Calonne thus employed sixty-six millions, ardent to gratify the fancy, and gild the public misery. The house of Beaujon, the forest of Gresigne, Chanteloup, the Duchy d'Amboise, the isle of Ré, the isle Dieu, the hotel de Boulainvilliers, that of the intendancy of Paris, and that of the general excise . . . such were the useless, burthensome acquisitions by which Calonne maintained the illusion. When he no longer knew how to dissipate the public fortune, he exchanged domains, and like a good-humored player, he appeared to think that the state should lose nobly. The abbé d'Espagnac, his friend, received in exchange for the countship of Sancerre, a crowd of domains of which that of Hatton-Chatel was one. This domain adjoined the property of Hanonville, which belonged to the minister, and was found soon afterwards annexed to it. From thence a very natural suspicion of connivance arose; from thence the clamors of public opinion, that M. Calonne, from his habit of giving to others, remembered himself: This was but an imprudence perhaps; but the probity of a minister should be like the wife of Cæsar; it was not enough for her to be pure, she must appear to be so.

Among so many accumulated expenses some useful ones were formed, like that of the port of Cherbourg; some were ridiculous, some irritating. The people saw with anger the wall arise which now encircles Paris, and those lofty barriers built by Calonne to lodge the too numerous com-

* Eclaircissements et pieces justificatives pour servir de suite à la requette présentée au Roi par M. de Calonne, etc. p. 63.

† Edict of August, 1784—also Edict of October, 1785.

‡ True state of the tax of 1785—Bailly, Hist. Financière, t. 2. p. 292.

§ Mémoires politiques et historiques, t. 6. p. 144.

missioners of a 'detested octroi.* A pamphlet attributed to Count Mirabeau,† denounced the indecency of such walls, monuments of slavery, the luxuriousness of which was an insult.‡ The author concluded with this phrase of Marshal de Noailles: "I am of opinion that the author of the plan should be hung."

But what excited the most lively clamors against Calonne, was the recoinage of the gold coin, an operation which was unattackable, however, and which was very well conducted, but which served as a pretext for hatred, and which the historians of our days, from not having studied, have declared to dishonor the memory of Calonne. We must clear up this historical point of our financial annals.

Since the discovery of the American mines, the relative value of gold tended gradually to exceed that of silver. Before 1726, a mark of gold was worth ten marks of silver. In 1726, the period of the last recoinage in France, the value of the mark of gold had risen to fourteen marks five ounces of silver. The height in the comparative value of the gold coin was more considerable in Portugal, England, and especially in Spain, where the value of a mark of gold rose in 1779 to fifteen marks seven ounces of silver.

The rectification which Spain made was prejudicial to France, by encouraging extravagantly the export of materials in gold. A mark of gold, which was worth in France but fourteen marks five ounces in silver, when carried to Spain there brought the exporter fifteen marks seven ounces. To check the export, and at the same time make a profit to the state from the commercial height of gold in Europe, Calonne determined to carry the value of one mark of gold to fifteen marks four ounces of silver, that is to say, to raise it a fifteenth.§ In consequence of this, an edict of October, 1785, ordered a recoinage; all the louis were called into the mint to be recoined, and from the mark of gold, out of which they had formerly made but thirty louis, they now made thirty-two. It was gaining two louis on the thirty, or a fifteenth.|| Thus a profit was made of one livre twelve sols out of each of the old louis of twenty-four livres.

In former recoinages the king had appropriated the entire benefit to himself; the public was now admitted to a share. They received the louis in exchange for twenty-five livres, and they reserved only twelve sols the louis to the king, from which were to be deducted the expenses of the work and the inevitable waste. But whilst they were making a large profit on the weight, they were compelled to submit to a small loss upon the quality, which is the standard of the purity of coin. It was done as follows:

* Mémoires politiques et historiques, t. 6. p. 144.

† Bachaumont, Mémoires Secrets, t. 34. p. 198.

‡ Reclamation d'un Citoyen contre la Nouvelle enceinte de Paris, élevé par les fermiers généraux. See the preface.

§ It is from a pamphlet printed in 1783, under the title of *M. de Calonne tout entier*, that most of the accusations against this minister have been drawn. The author of this pamphlet, Carra, thus explains himself, the motives for the hatred with which Calonne had inspired him: "the work of favors was completed on the 31st of July, 1786, and I was not included in it." Chap. 2. p. 18.

|| Carra says a sixteenth, in *M. de Calonne tout entier*, and this is not the only error which this pamphlet contains.

The legal quality of our coin had been fixed at twenty-two carats. But perfectly refined gold, being twenty-four carats, the law authorized a mixture of two parts of alloy; in other words, it permitted but two parts of copper to twenty-two parts of gold. As this admixture was, however, very difficult to make with exact precision, they had admitted, under the name of *remèdes*, contrivances the mean of which had been fixed at eleven thirty seconds, that is, that the work should be regarded as good when the quality of the louis did not differ, but eleven thirty seconds from the degree of fineness prescribed by the regulations.* The louis was consequently to be twenty-one carats, and twenty-one thirty-two's.

In conformity with usage, they wished the true value of the specie which was to be recoined to be discovered. They collected for this purpose a certain quantity of the coin struck in all the mints of the kingdom, and formed ingots from them whose quality was carefully proved.† It was discovered that the quality of the old louis was too low, that they wanted four thirty seconds of fineness, and they ordered these four thirty seconds to be added to each recoinage, so as to bring all the new coin to a general and uniform value of twenty-one carats and twenty-one thirty seconds.

The infusion of this part of fine gold in the recoinage, having cost no less than three millions, they were taken from the twelve sols reserved for the king; and this was just, since this deficit was the fault of the workmen employed in the fabrication. They took from the twenty sols allowed to the owners of the louis, the loss which the pieces had undergone in weight, as well from rubbing as from fraudulent alterations, which reduced the mean profit to the owners to fifteen sols.

About nine hundred thousand marks were brought into the mints. This was only about one-half of what had been struck since 1726; from which it may be seen that the other half had disappeared from circulation, in consequence of the advantages derived from drawing it off.

Such was the operation. It made a profit of twenty millions to private persons; it procured seven millions for the treasury; it rectified the quality of the coin, and placed France beyond the reach of the damage to which we submitted in our exchanges.

And yet the enemies of Calonne found in it a matter to object to. They began by denying that the old gold coin was of inferior quality, which would take away the necessity of adding to the fineness in the coinage; and they accused the minister of finance of having appropriated to himself the value of an affinage which had not taken place. The accusation was difficult to maintain, for it was necessary to do so, either to deny authentic acts, to extend the complicity in the falsehood and robbery to the attorney-general of the court of the mint, to the inspector-general of the assay, and to the individual assayers. A fortuitous circumstance happened unfortunately to give credit to the suspicions. M. de Bajerlé, the director of the mint at Strasburg, was old, and had been infirm for a long time. His clerk did not make the prescribed addition, and yet passed the value into the accounts; the fraud was discovered.

* Necker, Administration des Finances, t. 3. et p. 45 et suiv.

† Requete au roi, par M. de Calonne, p. 33.

In the midst of it M. de Bajerlé died, and the rumor was spread that the robbery by the clerk had been authorized by a confidential letter from the minister. In vain did Calonne display the greatest severity towards the untrustworthy assayer; in vain did he summon his accusers to produce their proofs, opposing to them the testimony of the son of M. de Bajerlé, a counsellor to the parliament of Nancy, and a man of respectable character.* Opinion was not disarmed; Calonne underwent the penalty of his bad reputation.

The day which the minister had foreseen came, however, that decisive day, in which the monarchy absolutely ruined, at the end of expedients and nonsense, thought itself almost happy in finding its last chance of safety in the destruction of its work.

In a memoir which he transmitted to Louis the Sixteenth towards the end of 1785, Calonne, unfolded his plans. What must have been the astonishment of the king! The bold spendthrift of Yesterday, spoke suddenly the language of Turgot, and surpassed the rigidity of Necker. The charming madman who had thrown gold about by the handful, had suddenly reformed, and proposed no longer middle terms, but *great measures*.† He presented to Louis the Sixteenth, the imposing picture of reframing his kingdom. It was necessary to introduce unity where there was division. The provinces obeyed different laws; they must be brought to an uniform principle. They were separated by custom-houses; they must boldly break down these internal barriers, and drive them back to the frontiers. The countries where provincial sessions were held enjoyed the right of representation; it was necessary to overthrow this privilege, and *apply a form of national deliberations* to all France.‡ The territorial taxation fell only on the property of plebeians; it must be extended without exception to all the property of the king, the nobles and priests, and a payment in kind must be substituted for the payment in money. The people were crushed by contributions; they must reduce the taille, diminish the price of salt, abolish the *corvée* for ever. . . . In a word there were to be no more privileges, no more distinctions or parcellings, justice and unity were to be everywhere. It was as it were a summing up of the ideas of Vauban, the views of Turgot, and the plans of Necker.

Such a remodelling of the monarchy could not be submitted to the approval of parliament. At the single word of an equal division of the public burthens, the nobles of the robe had become enraged. Calonne had moreover exchanged such hostile avowals and injurious language with the first president, that intercourse between the ministry and the magistracy was irreparably broken off, a personal quarrel having become an affair of government.§ Thus reappeared the ardent, inevitable question of the states general. In the mean time they resorted to an assembly of notables.

The list was drawn up quietly and arranged skilfully. The nobility,

* See les Pieces justificatives, published at the conclusion of the Requête au roi.

† See, le Mémoire de M. de Calonne au roi, on the necessity of convening the notables.

‡ Ibid.

§ Monthyon, Particularités sur les ministres des finances.

parliament, clergy and third estate were to concur in the formation of the assembly. But the numbers were so combined that each of the foreseen resistances was condemned, when taken separately, to a numerical inferiority. For example, the clergy, whose privileges they were about to threaten, had but fourteen bishops, and four ecclesiastics to represent it; they then gave to the third estate, the mayors of the twenty-five principal cities of the kingdom; Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, Bourdeaux, Rouen, Toulouse, Strasburg, Lille, Nantes, Metz, Nancy, Reims, Bourges, Ly-moges, Orleans, Tours, Montpellier, Montauban, Caen, Amiens, Bay-onne, Chalons, Valenciennes, Clermont. Toyes which claimed it, was added.

The secret was well kept; the queen even suffered the humiliation of being excluded from the confidence. The annunciation of the convo-cation was then made suddenly, and surprised every body. Calonne here thought that the astonishment was a chance of success, because it gave the importance of a decisive stroke of state policy to an unexpected measure. The moment was come to prove if the monarchy wished to be saved and could be.

Having reached Versailles before the 29th of January, 1789, the no-tables were not assembled on the day pointed out in the letters de cachet. They were allowed to wander about the city in the middle of winter, without an avowed motive or an excuse, and it was rumor which apprised them of their successive adjournments, first to the 7th of February, then to the 14th, and finally to the 22d. It was known vaguely that ministers were sick, that M. de Vergennes was dying, and that manag-ing his life as he did the finances, Calonne had wasted and lost his health in pleasures. These rumors were well founded. Calonne, as exhausted as the treasury, was not ready, neither on the 29th of January, nor the 9th of February, nor on the 14th, not having been able to finish the numerous papers in which, under the name of reforms, he was about to unroll the plan of a revolution to be put to vote.

Vergennes died on the night of the 12th, and the death of this minis-ter, as faithful as capable, inflicted great sorrow on Louis the Sixteenth, who, scarcely strong enough to bear the weight of a peaceful kingdom, saw with alarm the royalty become a combat. Having gone to visit the cemetery in which Vergennes was to be laid, he was seized with emo-tion, and was heard to murmur these words, "how happy should I be to repose by your side."*

It was in the banqueting hall, consecrated two years afterwards to the States General, that Louis the Sixteenth opened the assembly of the notables in a speech destitute of weight and grandeur. Calonne was cutting, witty, bold, and easy. He made a general confession of the state of affairs to the assembly; he avowed, in a speech full of grace, that on arriving at the management of affairs, he had found empty boxes, confidence gone, six hundred and forty millions of exactable debts, and an annual deficit of eighty millions.† He was not sparing of eulogies on

* *Mémoires historiques et politiques*, t. 6. p. 132.

† *Procès-verbal de l'assemblée des notables tenue à Versailles en l'année 1789.* Paris, from the royal press, in 4mo.

himself, and acknowledged that he had repaired every thing; money was abundant, credit restored, the debts of the war had been paid, the expenses were running and a novelty, he had brought back the payment of the *rentes*, so long behindhand, to the very day on which they fell due. Calonne made bold paradoxes succeed the eclat of these contrasts, and under the transparent tissue of allusion he established a parallel between himself and Necker, in which the pretension of the administrator was, besides, only the insolence of the gentleman. He pointed out two kinds of economy; the one severe, repulsive, driving away solicitors by its severe exterior, and of a sterile harshness. The other,—whose invention he appeared to attribute to himself,—noble and grand, loveable even in its rigor, permitting its refusals rather than its favor to be counted, and calumniating itself by the appearances of facility which a desire to injure transformed into profusion. Circumstances had, besides, prohibited him from taking an *attitude of penury*. He avoided explanations as to the exact amount of the deficit, and to the important question, if to the eighty millions already stated, was to be joined the interest of the enormous loans contracted during the ministries of Necker, Fleury, d'Ormesson, and his own. The deficit? it had existed for ages; it had increased from year to year; the administration of Necker alone had increased it forty millions, and he, Calonne, had had a frightful void to fill up. . . . And after having thus traced the genealogy of the deficit, he added, to enlighten every thing by a word, that, *from 1776 to the end of 1786, ten years, one billion, two hundred and fifty millions had been borrowed.*

The veil was raised; the illusion which the *statement* had produced in Europe, suddenly vanished; the minister who had signed that famous account, the prince who had permitted it to be printed, the keeper of the seals, Miromesnil, and the Count de Vergennes, who had certified to its correctness, were attainted with a suspicion of ignorance or of knavery. The scandal of such a falsehood was less great, however, than the stupor caused by the appearance of a deficit, whose depths they scarcely dared to sound; and the alarms of the assembly redoubled, when Calonne, passing on to the means of arresting this undefined evil, declared the absolute insufficiency of economy, and that it would be impossible to borrow *always*, tax *more*, anticipate *still*. What was then the sovereign remedy? To fill up the abyss, to restore the finances, to reanimate the monarchy, to continue to live, in fine, what was left? . . . THE ABUSES; and immediately awakening by the dignity of his speech a true thought clothed in the forms of a Sully, Calonne exclaimed, as a tribune of the people might have done,

“The abuses have for their defenders interest, credit, fortune, and old prejudices, which time appears to have respected; but what does their vain consideration avail against the public good and the necessity of the state? . . . The abuses which we are now talking of annihilating for the public safety, are the most considerable, the most protected; those whose existence weighs upon the productive and laboring classes; the abuses of pecuniary privileges; the *exceptions to the common law*, and so

many unjust exemptions which cannot free a part of the tax payers but by aggravating the fate of the rest."*

Never had such words resounded in the ears of a King of France, and Calonne did not pronounce them here until after having declared "that these views are entirely those of the king."†

We may imagine what was the attitude of the notables, when these two images, equally importunate, were presented before them; the deficit on one side, reforms on the other. The deficit was unknown; eighty millions were avowed, but the whole was not told. The reforms were frightful; for it was the old parchment of privileges that they were talking about clearing up in this remodelling of the monarchy, in which plebeians were to be suddenly confounded with gentlemen, laymen with clerks. Calonne was moreover sheltered behind the will of the king; but this wounded the notables to the quick, and especially the clergy, whom the principal attack threatened. "Is this not to make a mock of the nation?" rudely exclaimed the Archbishop of Narbonne. "Is it not to take its representatives for sheep and beasts, to assemble them here merely to obtain their sanction to a piece of work already digested?"‡

This was a prelude to the storms which were about to break out against Calonne. In an assembly to which the nobles brought but experience in arms, and the parliamentarians the science of legal proceedings, the influence which the use of language gives, belonged naturally to Cicé, Boisgelin, Lomenie de Brienne, skilful prelates, who had learned, when teaching the affairs of God, to manage the discussion of their own business.

The first document touching the provincial assemblies was well received; but as soon as they came to the second, the minister could perceive that the iron had touched the wound. To apply territorial taxation to all proprietors without distinction! The notables took the alarm, and prompt to thrust aside the question, they hastened to transport it to the land of the deficit, demanding to know, before deliberating, the state of the receipts and expenses.

Calonne was surprised at so high a step. Dissimulating his feelings, however, he consented to *communicate* the state of the finances to a commission of forty-two members; this reticence appeared to be offensive; bitter words passed, the quarrel warmed. In vain did Calonne display much coolness and subtle eloquence in it, they wanted the figures, they wanted to know that the deficit was, not eighty millions, but one hundred and twelve.§

Thus by a manœuvre more skilful than loyal, the notables cast the question of reforms into the shade, and occupied their attention with the phantom of the deficit.

It is just to add, that if the notables feared the advent of liberty, they at least spoke its language; that if they laid aside disquieting problems

* Discours de Calonne dans le proces verbal de l'assemblée des notables, (1789,) p. 72.

† Proces verbal de l'assemblée des notables, p. 56.

‡ Mémoires secrets de Bachaumont, t. 34. p. 196.

§ Ibid. t. 34. p. 221. Calonne afterwards carried this deficit to an hundred and fifteen millions. See his reply to Necker, p. 90.

with a careful hand, they at least recognized and saluted the principle of equality in an indefinite and vague form. Was it not, besides, very natural that before giving so many new resources to a devouring administration, they should ask to see the ledger?

This is what appeared to strike public opinion, and far from blaming the ill will of the notables, it studied to encourage them. The better to irritate their vanity and animate them to resistance, they called them the *notés*,* an ironical allusion to the passive part which the minister destined for them; the name of *grenadiers of the notables*, was given to the members of the bureau, over which the Prince de Conti presided, on account of their vigorous opposition to the plans of Calonne; and those who gave way were compared to those Chinese pagodas, whose only duty is to bow the head in sign of assent.†

Calonne, notwithstanding his bold carriage, and the popularity of his initiative was persecuted, quizzed, lampooned on all sides. The queen, who was supposed to have had her share of these known prodigalities, was exposed to cruel sarcasms; when she went to the opera, the people shouted, "There goes Madame *Deficit*."‡

That was only one of the aspects of the agitation. Whilst the flashes of French gaiety were scintillating by thousands, the assembly of the notables was furnishing food for still more serious thoughts. The spirit of the opposition was embittered by those debates, whose noise the echo of the saloons increased by prolonging it. The books of Necker, conceived and drawn up with the clearness of knowledge, and animated by a sober color, had so brought grave occupations into vogue, that to talk about the finances was then regarded as an evidence of mind. The occasion offered was admirable, tempting, and the garden of the Palais Royal resounded with more harangues, than the city of London had ever heard.

The king was, however, astonished at so many obstacles, and gave free course to the brutality of his anger, or to groans over his weakness. It was now reported that he had shed tears, and now that he had signed thirty letters de cachet in blank, in order to rid himself of the most turbulent members of the assembly.|| What is certain is, that passing from irritation to mildness, he fell into a violent passion, and became submissive again to fall into a passion, and again become submissive. When the notables went to him to inform him of the amount of the deficit verified by them, he became furious, seized a chair and broke it, exclaiming "That knave Calonne deserves that I should hang him."¶ And yet the king loved that Calonne at the bottom, and his violence only served to mask the irritation with which the resistance of the notables penetrated him. He had convened them as being, if we may so speak, the family council of the monarchy; should he expect to find imperious and almost

* Mémoires de Fleury.

† The assembly was divided into seven bureaux, each of which was presided over by a prince of the blood.

‡ Mémoires secrets de Bachaumont, t. 34.

§ Mémoires historiques et politique du règne de Louis the 16th, t. 6. p. 171.

¶ Bachaumont, Mémoires secrets, t. 35. p. 13.

¶ Mémoires historiques et politiques, t. 6. p. 169.

threatening menaces of censure, where he had looked for pure adhesions of respect?

Calonne then made a calculation which at any other time would have been a just one. Perceiving that in the eyes of the people, he personified the lost millions, he endeavored to bring back the public attention from the question of the deficit, to that of the reforms; he printed all the documents he had sent in to the notables, and added a preamble to them, in which he said; "Have the privileges been sacrificed? . . . Yes, justice wills it, want requires it. They will pay more without doubt; but who? Those who did not pay enough." This writing was scattered profusely. He inundated Paris and the provinces with it. In order to spread it the better, he addressed it to the curate,* and thus turning aside the tempest which threatened him, he denounced to the public a resistance which appeared to prevent the king from benefiting his kingdom. It was a true appeal to the people.

But by one of those inconsistencies of opinion, whose singularity is but apparent, and may be referred to profound causes, it happened that Calonne had against him those especially whose cause he pleaded. In giving himself up to prodigalities which were hateful to the people, he rendered himself less unpopular than he became in urging reforms which the people passionately desired. A striking and glorious index of the greatness of the events which were preparing! A striking proof that in the minds of men, the moral side of ameliorations which are demanded, rules the material and vulgar side. That the revolution should have risen at a signal given by a skeptic, a spendthrift, the too easy cashier of the Count d'Artois, the cynical tributary of the boudoirs of the Trianon, would have been certainly a strange thing; but that the regeneration of France was reduced to be but the affair of an intendant; that the homage due to the idea of justice, should be presented under the form of a proceeding of the administration was an historical scandal. It was to this that the nation nobly refused to subscribe. It wished for neither the initiative of Calonne nor his stamp, nor for the adulterous mixture, which, in his plans, made the majesty of the principles which had been invoked disappear.

What then remained to the minister to sustain him? Louis the Sixteenth abandoned him from lassitude; the notables had a hatred for him which his recent denunciation of them had changed into fury; public opinion, finally, was boisterous for a new minister.

On the 8th of April, Easter, the *club of the politicians* received a sealed packet, which was not to be opened until eleven o'clock at night.† The hour having struck, they opened the package and found in it a work without a title, serving as a reply to the assertions of Calonne, in regard to the incorrectness of the *statement*. Knowing that Calonne was to hand in his resignation at ten o'clock, and fearing lest he should be suspected of having contributed to the fall of a rival, Necker had wished to assign a certain date to the appearance of his book.

On the next day it was known in Paris, that Calonne was overthrown

* *Mémoires de Benseval*, t. 2. p. 218.

† *Bachaumont, Mémoires secrets*, t. 34. p. 244.

and had fallen with avidity on the work of Necker. Skilful as was the defence of the old Geneveve minister, it could not be conclusive, and was not. But the dignity of his language, and the artificial clearness of his calculations, in which millions appeared to obey his will, and range themselves in persuasive columns according to the wants of his cause, dazzled the Parisians, and they hastened to proclaim Necker in the right; impatient as they were to show Calonne in the wrong. Louis the Sixteenth, disturbed by the noise which the popularity of Necker caused even in Versailles, sent him a letter de cachet, which exiled him to forty leagues from the capital,* but he experienced the humiliation of seeing all Paris surround the author of the Statement with honors, so that among the visitors who went to compliment the exile, was remarked the most influential of the notables, and a candidate for the vacant ministry, Lomenie de Brienne.†

Whilst Necker was removing slowly from the capital, proud of a persecution which his renown achieved, Calonne on his side was traversing the kingdom, pursued from city to city, both by the howlings of the multitude‡ and the letters de cachet, which exiled him first to Berry, then to Flanders, then to Lorraine, but braving his ill fortune, always the same, always jesting and repeating loudly, that he would consent to be hung, *if his august accomplices would do the same.*§

CHAPTER VI.

FATALITY OF THE STATES GENERAL.

Leomenie de Brienne—He dissolves the assembly of the Notables—Physiognomy of Princes of that assembly—Plans of the Count of Provence—The States General demanded—Royalty at strife with the parliaments—Reforms of the different equipages of the court—Railings of the nation—Violent scene between the Duke de Coigny and Louis the Sixteenth—Bed of justice of the 6th of August, 1787—The public criers—Robert de Saint Vincent—The parliament at Troyes—Memorable sitting of the 19th of November, 1789—The King promises the States General—D'Epréménil—Exile of the Duke of Orleans—Night of the 4th of May—Bed of justice of the 8th of May—Troubles—Fall of Brienne and recall of Necker—Destiny of Louis the Sixteenth.

NOTHING succeeded with the monarchy; neither the prodigalities of Calonne, nor the economy of Necker. The king saw turning against him—not only the reforms he dreaded, but even those he proposed. The invincible fatality of events did not permit him to oppose himself to the revolution, nor to go along with it. The destiny of that prince was to be its irresolute adversary, irritated spectator and victim.

* Madame de Stael, *Considerations sur la Revolution Française*. The daughter of Necker is, however, mistaken in giving the exile of her father as anterior to the fall of Calonne. See t. 1. p. 116 et 117.

† Ibid.

‡ Bachaumont, *Mémoires Secrets*, t. 35. p. 30.

§ *Mémoires historiques et politiques*, t. 6. p. 169.

A proceeding remained which they had not yet used, and which they tried ; violence.

Lomenie de Brienne was called to replace Calonne, with the title of Chief of the Council of Finances and Minister of State, after a sort of interim, filled by M. Bouvart de Fourqueux, a Septuagenarian Councilor of State, who was modest and but little known. De Fourqueux thought the functions of a minister above him ; Lomenie de Brienne on the contrary, thought himself superior to them. He had been knocking at the door of the council for fifteen years, but Louis the Sixteenth did not esteem him, having discovered in the papers of his father, the Dauphin, that the Abbe de Loménie was regarded as an atheist and a philosopher.* It is related that when he was a candidate for the Archbishopric of Paris, the king said one day, "It is at least necessary that the Archbishop of Paris should believe in God."† He had completed his political education, by frequenting the society of the philosophers, and by assiduous reading of the memoirs of the Cardinal de Retz. A partisan of the economists, he had fashioned himself into a sort of intolerant liberalism, which is the property of that famous school. A friend of Turgot, he joined like him, the humor of a grand vizier to theories of liberty. Witty, with the air of profundity, and more gallant than was even suitable for a prelate, he possessed influence every where, in the assemblies of the clergy in which he showed skill in the management of affairs, and among women of the world, who more than once made him the arbiter of their quarrels with faithless or suspected lovers.‡ Although he appeared but rarely at his Archbishopric of Toulouse, he occupied their minds about him, never failing to mark his sojourn by some of those shining acts of benevolence, whose renown is scattered abroad, and which sprang with him, not from the charity of the Christian, but the philanthropy of the philosopher. The true cause of his elevation, however, was the perseverance of the Abbé de Vermond, in extolling him in the circle of the queen. It was she, who overcoming the repugnance of Louis the Sixteenth, had him appointed first, head of the Council of Finance, and then Minister of State, and as if to explain that he was placed in the rank of the Richelieus and Mazarins, she said aloud in a full court, "Do not be deceived gentlemen, *he is a first minister.*"

The assembly of the notables, resumed the labors which had been interrupted for a short time. In possession of the state of the finances which Calonne had been unwilling to leave in their hands, they should have been enabled to find in them a final line clearly marked out, and which would have indicated with precision the situation of affairs ; they sought for it in vain. The deficit was neither known nor appreciable ; a baneful uncertainty which permitted the imagination to aggrandize the dangers of the kingdom. Some spoke of an hundred and eight millions, others of an hundred and twenty-five, of an hundred and thirty, and even an hundred and fifty millions. In the absence of serious accountability and of important documents which Louis the Sixteenth had abstracted

* *Mémoires historiques et politiques*, t. 6. p. 36.

† *M. de Levis, Souvenirs et portraits*, p. 103.

‡ *Sénac de Meilhan, Du gouvernement, des Mœurs et des Conditions en France.*

from the bundle of papers,* some went so far as to deny the reality of the deficit,† fearful lest they should have to come to the decisive remedy; the equalization of the land tax.

The words *States General* were however heard. Lafayette and Castillon, the attorney general of the parliament of Aix, had formally demanded them in the bureau over which the count d'Artois presided, to the great horror of that prince. The assembly which felt that the time was approaching, when it would be necessary to pronounce on the ways and means, adopted the idea of the States General with vivacity,‡ preferring rather to declare its own competency, than to vote its patriotism. The notables censured every thing without specifying any thing, and Brienne should have dismissed them, tired as he was of their speeches, which were too wise to be so little conclusive.

The archbishop of Toulouse delivered a strange speech on the day of their adjournment, and which points out well the immense disorder in the midst of which the old monarchy existed. He congratulated them on having shown the importance of the deficit. That which was a disgrace to the monarchy did them honor. What! was it necessary that they should come to Versailles, from the four cardinal points of the kingdom, to learn the situation of the treasury from the head of the royal council of the finances? To learn from the keeper of the documents, the truth which the documents contained. Who would believe this? Taking the mean of an hundred and forty millions,§ which Brienne admitted as the deficit, his plan was soon drawn up. It was to reduce the expenses forty millions, raise fifty by taxation, and borrow fifty more.

The notables on separating went to sow disquiet every where. But seeing them return from an assembly, which had not known how to will any thing or resolve any thing, France learned that itself alone was hereafter capable of changing its own fortune, and conducting itself.

The assembly of the notables had been as it were a theatre on which important physiognomies were revealed. Each of the princes of the blood revealed his character in it. The Duke of Orleans|| exhibited himself as he then was; too fond of pleasure to resign himself to the cares of a part; and whilst he was thought to be at Versailles at the head of his bureau, he was traversing Paris in a huntsman's dress with his dogs.¶ The frankness mingled with haughtiness of the Count d'Artois was remarked. But the one who attracted the most particular attention was the Count de Provence, of whose secret designs it is important to speak here. Assiduous and attentive to the deliberations, he forgot nothing which could attract public opinion to him. In speaking of the gabelle he said "That nothing should remain of *that infernal machine*, but the recollection of a past evil."** He said of his own accord, that a respectful resistance to

* This avowal is found in the *mémoires du Baron de Besenval*, t. 2. p. 233.

† Sallier, *Annales françaises*, p. 60.

‡ *Histoire du gouvernement français depuis l'assemblée des notables*, p. 100.

§ *Procès-verbal de l'assemblée des notables tenue en 1787*, p. 302.

|| By the death of his father in 1783, the Duke de Chartres, of whom we have spoken in the preceding chapters had become Duke of Orleans.

¶ Bachaumont, *mémoires secrets*, t. 35. p. 132.

** *Histoire du gouvernement français depuis l'assemblée des notables*, p. 67.

the orders of the sovereign was not blameable; that it was permissible to enlighten him without offending him.* For this artificial prince, the precocious obesity of whose person appeared to permit only the calculations of an easy ambition, had his eyes constantly fixed upon the future. He cherished in the dark, the plan of mining gradually, not the monarchy, but the monarch. In public, he spoke as a possible heir to the throne; in private he acted as an impatient and greedy successor, giving enough boldness to his measures to render them popular, with enough prudence not to have to disavow them should he some day happen to wear the crown.

To re-establish the feudal regime in its ancient splendor, that is to misconstrue the work of Richelieu, was the hidden aim of his policy. He would have wished to govern at the head of a chosen nobility, who concentrating the possession of the territory in their hands, should replace the parliament in registering the laws. In order to assure his ascendancy over this high aristocracy, he would have *pledged* the domains of the crown to them, reserving to himself the right of taking them back on the death of each mortgagee; an infallible means of introducing servilism among the heirs. His dream in a word was a return to the great vassalships of the middle ages.† The future king of the charter was then dreaming over an imitation of the division of England, by William the Conqueror. Thus he employed his fortune in the acquisition of domains. He allowed some portion of his views to escape in the assembly of the notables, when in their last session he reminded them that he was *the first of the gentlemen*.§

Before dashing itself against the nation, the monarchy was to meet it wherever a shadow of representation appeared. The field of battle was transferred to the parliament.

The different edicts approved by the nobles, concerning the provincial assemblies, freedom of trade in grain, and the abolition of the *corvées* were registered without opposition; but scarcely had the edict for a stamp duty been presented, when violent murmurs announced an approaching combat. It was levied on invoices, certificates of study, receipts for rents, registers of merchants, law papers, the journals, pieces of music, and even the receipts of the pawnbrokers; why did the archbishop of Toulouse present this before that of the land subsidy, which was just? How had it escaped the counsellors of the crown, that the parliament had a very plain pretext for rejecting the first, which it could not have had for rejecting the last without revolting the public conscience? How came it that a man who, if he had not genius had intellect, was incapable of seeing that which a child might have seen? It is because a superior power wills and directs things.

To turn aside attention by removing it towards the deficit, parliament,

* Nougaret, Règne de Louis Seize, t. 2. p. 35.

† Barrère, le dernier jour de Paris sous l'ancien régime, at the end of the *mémoires de Barrère*, published by Hippolyte Carnot and David d'Angers.

‡ Manuscrit de Sauquaire-Souligné. It is remarkable that this manuscript here agrees with the *mémoires de Barrère*. See the last page of the preliminary chapter.

§ Speech of Monsieur, the brother of the king, at the closing session. *Procès-verbal de l'assemblée des notables*, p. 308.

like the notables, exacted a communication as to the state of the royal treasury, and it was then that the abbé Sebathier allowed these words to escape. "It is not the *States of the Finances* that we need, gentlemen, it is the *States General*." A celebrated comparison which then expressed the thought of a whole people. The parliament of Paris itself listened favorably to this play on words, too serious at the bottom for them to care about remarking on its pleasant form. In declaring itself unfit to consecrate the tax and in appealing to the imprescriptible right of the nation the parliament appeared to obey a feeling of honor. "Commissioned," it said, "by the sovereign to announce his will to the people, the parliament has never been commissioned by the people to replace them."* A singular and too tardy confession. Was the parliament dealing fairly? It was certainly surprising that after having registered loans for a billion two hundred and fifty millions, it should suddenly have become scrupulous before a tax which threatened its privileges; and Brienne would have been justified in saying to the magistrates; be careful, the disinterestedness of to-day condemns the usurpation of yesterday. But no, such was the vertigo of this man sent, none knows how, to lead the funeral procession of the absolute monarchy, that he never even dreamed of raising before an attentive people, the mask with which the members of the parliament covered themselves. He only knew how to become indignant and vexed, to rage.

The parliament was ordered to Versailles on the 6th of August, 1787, where the king, seating himself in his bed of justice and speaking with the tone of a master, orders the registry of the two edicts, the stamp tax and the land subsidy. But the magistrates had protested in advance against what they called a *phantom of deliberation*;† and having returned the next day to their chambers, they declared the transcribings which had been ordered null and illegal.

The royalty, having no money, found itself thus placed between bankruptcy and violence; a stroke of state policy was necessary either against the creditors or parliament. In this alternative a violent proceeding was what flattered most the trifling of Brienne, and the impetuous vanity of keeper of the seals, Lamoignon. Letters de cachet were silently prepared.

But on its side the parliament communicating to the people the ardor with which it was animated, inflamed the heads of all. The young counsellors of the inquests, who went to the meetings as they would have marched to battle,‡ overcame the grave prudence of the old magistrates, of the grand chamber. The bazoche grumbled in the Pas-perdus. The citizens, crowding the steps of the palace, waited until the doors should be opened to demand imperiously the result of the deliberations which had been kept secret until then. A counsellor of parliament, Adrien Duport, had transformed his house into a club, at which Mirabeau, Target, Rœderer, the Marquis de Condorcet and the bishop of Autun§ met; and he announced to his colleagues a formal denuncia-

* Remontrances arrêtées au Parlement de Paris, les 16 et 21 Juillet.

† Histoire du gouvernement Français depuis l'assemblée des notables, p. 173.

‡ Annales Françaises par Sallier, ancien conseiller au Parlement de Paris, p. 60.

§ Mémoires de l'Abbé Morellet, t. 1. chap. 17. p. 336.

tion against Calonne, that is the court. Every thing was in a state of effervescence. Whoever advised moderation was accused of felony and of being sold to Brienne. The public criers had suddenly lowered their voices in the streets, and abstained, as if from shame, from pronouncing the title of the edicts which had emanated from the bed of justice.

During this time, the court, in order to quiet the agitation, afforded the sight of a small internal revolution, and made a noise about a regulation which reduced the expenses of the king and queen.* Marie Antoinette diminished the number of her horses, carriages and valets; she realized a saving of almost a million in articles of the table and chamber. The equipages of the wild boar, wolf and falconry were reformed; they suppressed the guard of the door, the gendarmes and the light-horse;† they ordered the demolition or sale of the chateaux of Choisy, la Muette, Madrid, Vincennes and Blois. The minister archbishop did not fear to take the government of the post-horses from the Duke de Polignac, which Calonne, out of complaisance for such a friend, had separated from the letter post, and he dared to demand from M. de Coigny his resignation of the post of first master of the horse, which the union of the large and small stable rendered useless.

But how irrevocable are the decrees which that invisible tribunal, the force of things, provides. Instead of appeasing the parliament thereby, as M. de Brienne had hoped, these reforms were a subject of ridicule. Some saw in them but a concession wrenched from fear, cowardice and the very retrenchments only served to bring to light abuses of which they were ignorant, unknown expenses, and which a deficit of an hundred and forty millions, naturally caused to be judged scandalous. Others affirmed that these reforms, besides being insignificant, served only to dim the lustre of the throne. What necessity was there to reform the falconry, the most brilliant and least expensive of all the charges of the crown? Was it not known that the captains of the different flights purchased their employments, and that the falconers, scattered through the provinces, came to Paris but once a year, in the spring, at their own expense and with their birds? Must they suppress at the same time the equipage of the wolf, the hunt of a savage and destructive animal, and that for a miserable saving of thirty thousand livres?

These reforms which Louis the Sixteenth heard blamed by public opinion, were the object of the most violent disputes in the palace of that prince. "It is frightful," said the gentry, "to live in a country in which one is not sure of possessing in the morning what he had over night; this is seen only in Turkey."‡ The Duke de Polignac after having forced the archbishop of Toulouse to apologize before the queen, was willing, *from generosity*, to hand in the resignation they expected. The Duke de Coigny went straight to Louis the Sixteenth, and the scene between them was such, that the king related it himself in these words, "The Duke of Coigny and myself were truly angry; but I think he would have struck me, if I had not left him."§

* Reglement publié le 9 Aout 1787.

† Histoire du gouvernement Français depuis l'assemblée des notables, p. 167.

‡ Mémoires de Baron de Besenval, t. 2. p. 256.

The people are not obliged to kings for what they do by force. In despite of the recent concessions, the parliament, by a vote of eighty-one to thirty-six, and amidst applauses from without, passed a decree on the 13th of April which refused to the edicts which had emanated from the bed of justice, the power to authorize the levy of the taxes and to deprive the nation of its rights.

Brienne and Lamoignon were encouraged by this news to strike the blow they were meditating, and on the morning of the 15th of August each magistrate received a letter de cachet, signed within eight days; it ran as follows: "Sir, I send you this letter, to order you to leave my good city of Paris to-day, and to go to that of Troyes, within four days, there to await my orders, prohibiting you to leave your house before your departure."

It was the day of the Assumption. Several members were seized with a redoubled fit of devotion and went to mass notwithstanding the prohibition. The old counsellor, Robert de Saint Vincent, said to the officer of the guards who brought him the sealed letter, "Sir, I have to serve to-day a greater master than the king; I inform you I am going to church."*

On the next day the brothers of the king carried the edicts to be registered by the chamber of accounts and the court of aids; and then might be seen the effects of the skill long displayed by the Count de Provence; although he was there as the minister of despotism, the multitude covered him with applause; so well did he know how to compose his countenance and affect a sadness at the circumstance. The Count d'Artois, franker in the insolence of his carriage, was received on the contrary with insults.†

The public anger however soon resounded in the provinces. On learning the exile of the parliament of Paris all the courts of the kingdom protested. The parliaments of Rouen, Rennes, Grenoble, Besançon, demanded that Calonne should be brought to judgment, and the States General convened. The parliament of Bourdeaux took so fierce a turn that it was transferred to Libourne.

The magistrates exiled to Troyes put a good face upon it, rejoicing secretly that the interrupted law proceedings were about to embitter the impassioned, grumbling crowd of suitors against the minister. They knew moreover that Burienné, who wanted funds to complete the year, would be very much embarrassed by his triumph, and would find it more difficult to pay than to conquer. It was necessary for him to negotiate. He addressed a letter in his own writing to the first president, and it was agreed that the two edicts being retracted, a second vingtième should be substituted therefore, to be levied without privilege or distinction until the year 1792.‡

Under these conditions, thanks to the ennui which, beginning to consume the young councillors of the inquests, suddenly removed from the

* Nougaret, *Régne de Louis Seize*, t. 2, p. 295.

† Bachaumont, *Mémoires Secrets*, t. 36, p. 25.

‡ Letter from Lomenie de Brienne to the President of the Parliament at Troyes, found among the papers of Louis the Sixteenth.

country of pleasures, noise and love, the parliament, recalled, returned to Paris and was reinstalled in the palace, saluted with shouts of joy, illuminations and fire-works, while the people burned upon the square a figure representing Calonne.*

The time of vacation and the fine days of autumn which attract the bourgeois of Paris, the magistrates, the rich and the thinkers, to the country, gradually led to the appeasement of these tumults. The pleasures of the fields gave a diversion to feelings about the misfortunes of the country, and the crisis appeared to be over, because it was no longer talked about. Since their return from Troyes, the members of parliament had also become more calm, several of them perceiving that it was not necessary to play with the popular emotions, and that to give a course to the passions of the multitude, was, according to the expression of Montaigne, *risking to beat and stir the waters for other fishermen*.

One of the most ardent counsellors, Duval d'Epréménil, even went secretly to the keeper of the seals, Lamoignon, and held a language to him which contrasted singularly with the impetuosity of the recent disputes. He proposed an agreement which would be turned to the advantage of the public peace. The States General, he said, are inevitable. Be careful that they do not become a source of trouble. Let the king promise them in the course of two or three years; that will restore confidence. Let all the loans which shall be required until the meeting of the states, be proposed at once and in advance; parliament will second the ministry, and if the choice of deputies be skilfully directed, the States General will restore by their deliberations, the power of the monarch and the tranquillity of the kingdom, force and peace. Lamoignon appeared to be struck by these views; he praised their prudence, adopted them and feigned to be moved even to tears.† But scarcely had Epréménil left him, than the keeper of the seals hastened to the principal minister—such was the title of Brienne—to relate the interview to him and to laugh with him over such unforeseen advances. Their first care was to noise abroad the visit of Epréménil and to hand it over to the commentaries of malignity,‡ by allowing it to be believed that the promise of an intendency had produced it. Peace was offered them; they wished for war. To rekindle a quarrel which was about expiring, was the inconceivable madness of these two men. They did not foresee that in the struggle they were bringing on, the monarchy would perish by a violent death, and they themselves die by a voluntary one.§

It was in the month of November, 1787, and many of the counsellors were tarrying in the country, when a royal session was suddenly announced for the 19th. The princes of the blood, the peers and most of the ministers were to assist at it. The king spoke harshly to the mem-

* Annales Françaises, p. 105.

† Sallier had these facts from the mouth of Epréménil.

‡ We find this fact in a manuscript about Jacques Duval et Epréménil, which was placed in our hands by the family and here agrees with the annals of Sallier.

§ Brienne and Lamoignon both ended by suicide. The latter killed himself in 1789; Brienne in 1793 escaped the punishment of the scaffold by taking poison. See l'Essai historique et critique de Paganel, t. 1. p. 26, 1815.

bers of the parliament, both about their past faults and his own rights. Two edicts were then presented; one of them created gradual and successive loans during a period of five years, for the sum total of four hundred and twenty millions, the other assured civil rights to protestants. The preamble to the first edict promised a convocation of the States General before the expiration of five years.

Thus the chosen of chance was finally to call on the chosen of intellect. To that Louis the Fourteenth who had had the insolence to give his own person as a definition of the state, France replied within a century, we all are the state. It was time that this reply should be understood; force promised right.

But Louis the Sixteenth said in five years. Why such delay? Was not the disorder great enough? Need they wait for more urgent dangers and have need of a larger sum than four hundred and twenty millions? Behold what different thinkers represented to the king with much freedom and liberty. The Abbé Sabathier set the example of a resistance enveloped in respectful forms. But an old counsellor rose; it was Robert de Saint Vincent, an austere Jansenist, to whom the rigidity of his principles and his morals and his retired life permitted a rude language, and inspired with a savage eloquence. He belonged to that strong race of members of parliament, who since the days of Saint Cyran were ready to brave Jesuits, kings and pope. "Four hundred and twenty millions of loans, he exclaimed, how can they expect parliament to give its vote in favor of such an act, whilst if a minor were to do the like, there is not a tribunal which would hesitate to annul them." Addressing himself to Louis the Sixteenth he compared the royalty to an improvident minor, who, in the gaiety of his heart, abandons himself to the most scandalous usury.—To borrow for the purpose of living, was to have recourse to death.—He counselled the king, he almost summoned him to convene the States General, not within five years, but promptly, without delay, without waiting until the evils of the kingdom should have become entirely incurable. Joining threats to censure he added: "Your ministers wish to avoid these States General, whose supervision they dread; but their hope is vain, the wants of the state will force you to assemble them here in 1789. . . . Yes, they will force you to it. . . . Sire, convene the states and create a loan if necessary; but withdraw those illusory promises of presenting to the assembly of the nation order restored, the state liberated; or rather withdraw all this preamble; it is unworthy of the royal majesty, it is indecent."

Immoveable and with his large eyes fixed upon the orator Louis the Sixteenth listened to this manly address to the close, which did not wound him, though its harshness was increased by the pronunciation of the delivery and the rudeness of the gesticulation. Robert de Saint Vincent imposed upon the king, Epréménil seduced him and was on the point of leading him. He besought Louis the Sixteenth to convene the States General for 1789. 1789, prophetic date, which already presented itself to many clear-sighted minds, as if a rapid and luminous intuition led them to measure exactly the time the monarchy had to live. Epréménil was then for a time truly eloquent. On this point, says Sallier, he

gained one of the finest triumphs eloquence can win. Perceiving the emotion of the king he redoubled his urgency. "Sire, you can by a word crown all our wishes. An universal enthusiasm will pass in the twinkling of an eye from this enclosure to the capital, from the capital to the whole kingdom. A presentiment which will not deceive me gives me the assurance of it; I read in the countenance of your majesty, that this intention is in your heart, this word upon your lips. Speak it, Sire, grant it to the love of the French people." The orator stopped, and the assembly had a mute picture before it, which was no less eloquent than the speech of Epréménil. The looks of this magistrate appeared to have fascinated Louis the Sixteenth, who ready to speak the hoped for word and keeping silence from embarrassment rather than indecision, none the less permitted it to be seen that he was moved and convinced. A few paces below the throne, Lamoignon; pale from rage and divining the defeat of the monarch, was burning to sustain this conquered will by a sign, but he dared not turn his head, fearful of thus proclaiming the empire of the servant and the abasement of the master.

The emotion lasted but a short time. When the votes had been collected by the first president, Lamoignon did not wait as was usual, until they had been counted; he mounted up to the throne with a frowning brow and features altered by restrained displeasure, and after he had spoken in a low voice to the king, Louis the Sixteenth pronounced these brief words, which caused consternation in the assembly. "I find that it is necessary to establish the loans required in my edict. I have promised the States General before 1792; my word should be sufficient for you. I order my edict to be registered."

As the chief register was writing the mention on the fold of the edict, the voice of the Duke of Orleans was suddenly heard rising in the midst of a slight noise which ran along the bench of the Messieurs, protesting against the illegality of the session, and demanding that there should be added to the mention of the registry, "*done by the most express command of his majesty.*" The king troubled, replied stammering, "It is all one to me . . . you are the master. . . . If . . . It is legal . . . because I wish it."* And having ordered the edict concerning the protestants to be read, he retired.

A decree, destined to remain secret on the registers, was then passed on motion of d'Epréménil. The parliament declared in it that it had no share in the transcript which had been ordered; but this timid and as it were clandestine protest was changed the next day to fury, when it was learned that the king had exiled the Duke of Orleans to Villers-Coterets; that the counsellors Fréteau and Sabathier, who were suspected of having dictated his protest to the prince, had been carried off, the one to the Castle of Dourlens, the other to Mount Saint Michael.

Paris was in a ferment. The Duke of Orleans, who, on leaving his palace, had been escorted in triumph to his carriage, and surrounded by a sudden popularity, was overwhelmed with praises. The people admired and boasted of his courage, as well as of the firmness of the two magistrates, and took pleasure in relating that the Baron de Breteuil,

* Annales Françaises, p. 129.

who has commissioned to arrest him, having, by orders of the king, offered to get into the carriage the better to watch him, the duke had said to him in a tone of fierce contempt, "Well, get up behind."

On their side the members of parliament gave the importance of an interest of the state to the arrest of the two counsellors, denouncing the scandalous abuse of the letters de cachet, their barbarous form, sprung from a despotism over which they had been too long silent, and which appeared to them to be intolerable, as soon as it struck two of their colleagues. They refused, then, to register the edict concerning the protestants until Fréteau and Sabathier had been set at liberty. But this time the court resisted public opinion. In vain did the parliament send to Versailles to solicit the recall of the Duke of Orleans and the deliverance of the two captives, the king sent back the deputies with the laconic coldness of a sultan.

During this time, the Archbishop of Toulouse, undermined by fever, weakened by frequent blood-lettings, and eaten up by maladies which we are astonished at meeting in a prelate, was striving against the torment of his lost health. He pursued, however, his despotic designs with the same audacity. The celebrated physician, Barthez, had prescribed for him absolute quiet and separation from business under penalty of death,* the ambitious prelate, finding in Lamoignon a colleague who was delighted to recommence Maupeou, dreamed on his bed of the brutal and absolute abolition of the parliaments. He coveted despotism for the king, the archbishopric of Sens, in exchange for that of Toulouse for himself. His desire on this last point was gratified; and as he had personal debts, a felling of timber worth nine hundred thousand livres, was granted him.†

A vague rumor suddenly circulates, and became gradually credited. It is asserted that the commandants and intendants of the provinces have received orders to go to their posts. Couriers, bearing mysterious despatches, which were to be opened, it was said on the same day, were seen to leave Versailles. It became finally known, that printers were laboring without relaxation on formidable edicts, in a workshop which a triple row of bayonets surrounded.‡

D'Epréménil having gained over the wife of one of the printers at the royal press, the latter threw out of the window a proof of the edicts, rolled up in a ball of potter's clay; and it was thus that the parliament learned that the place where its sessions were held was to be closed, the members dispersed, and a new company created whose functions would be to obey.

It may be imagined what was the consternation of some, the anger of others, at this news. Exalted by the danger, they all swore to remain united, and in a session at which the Dukes d'Uzès, de Rochefoucauld, de Praslin, de Fitz-James, etc., peers of the kingdom, were present, they decreed, in form of solemn protest, that the inviolability of the parliament is no less sacred than that of the king.

* Mémoires de Baron de Besenval, t. 2. p. 299.

† Ibid. t. 2. p. 300.

‡ Journal des Evénemens du moi de Mai, 1782, imprimé dans le tome 1, des chefs-d'œuvres politiques et littéraires—Mémoires Historiques et Politiques, t. 6. p. 185.

An order was then signed to carry off Goislard de Montsabert and d'Epréménil. This order was to be executed during the night of the 4th and 5th of May; but the two magistrates, warned secretly by a member of the council, escaped from their houses at break of day, and took refuge in the palace of justice.

On the opening of the chambers, the members of the parliament listen to the recital of the two escapes, place Goislard and d'Epréménil under the protection of the king, who strikes them, and by the law that he forgets; they send a deputation to Versailles, whose return they awaited, remaining in session. Towards midnight the steps of horses are heard. It was a regiment of cavalry, which came to surround the palace.* On another side it was announced that the court-yard was filled with sentinels, and the sappers were before the doors with raised axes. The members, who were dispersed through the lobbies, immediately meet in the great chamber, where, owing to the confusion, there were some strangers. These latter retired into the chamber of the Tournelle.

Thus restored to the severity of its usages, the parliament was waiting silent and irritated, when the Marquis d'Agoust, a major in the French guards, appeared. We must read this memorable scene, as one of the members of the sovereign court relates, in his lively memoirs.† It was night; the great chamber was only lighted by a feeble light; the most profound silence reigned in it, and the tranquillity of this nocturnal hour added to the terrible majesty of the circumstances. At the sight of this assembly in which were seated one hundred and twenty magistrates in their red robes, marshals of France, dukes and peers, princes of the church, the major was troubled, and he read the order for the arrest of Goislard and Epréménil with a faltering voice. "The court is about to deliberate," said the president; and as the Marquis d'Agoust pressed him to deliver up the two magistrates to him, he replied, with a gesture of contempt, "Where are Messieurs Montsabert and d'Epréménil," demanded the major who did not know them—"we are all d'Epréménil and Montsabert," exclaimed a member of the assembly, and the whole body repeated it. The major, disconcerted, retires for new orders. The deputies of the parliament having soon after returned from Versailles, inform their colleagues, that Louis the Sixteenth refused to receive them, that the written reply in which Lamoignon announced this refusal to them, had caused them to wait till midnight, as the king did not return from the chase, until eight o'clock at night.

The magistrates passed the night in the sanctuary of justice which resembled a besieged city.

At eleven o'clock in the morning, the Marquis d'Agoust presented himself again, accompanied by an officer of the short robe, who was enjoined, by the order of the king, to point out d'Epréménil and Montsabert. The officer, looking through the assembly, declared he did not see them. "Be careful, said d'Agoust, the order of the king provides that you shall show them to me. On my honor, sir, I repeat to you, that I do not see them."‡ The marquis was preparing to retire, when d'Epréménil,

* Mémoires de Weber, t. 1. chap. 2.

† Mémoires historiques et politiques du regne de Louis Seize.

‡ Ibid.

recalling him, said; "I, sir, am d'Epréménil; my conscience prohibits me from obeying arbitrary orders. If I resist, will your soldiers employ constraint?" On the affirmative reply of the major, and to avoid the scandal of being carried off forcibly, d'Epréménil declared that he yielded to violence. But before following the marquis d'Agoust, he appealed to the parliament; "I am the victim whom they are about to immolate on the very altar. . . . I pray the company not to forget the attachment I have vowed to it. Whatever be the fate that they reserve for me, I shall be always worthy of it." He embraced his colleagues who surrounded him, recommended his family to them, affected to bend profoundly before that assembly which power respected no longer, and walked with a firm step to the carriage, which was to convey him to the isle Sainte Marguerite. Goislard de Montsabert who had courageously imitated d'Epréménil, was carried off to the castle of Pierre Encise.

The parliament was in session thirty hours. Before separating, they drew up representations to the king, in which they praised the noble boldness of the magistrates who had been carried off, and asked for their enlargement. They then sallied forth between two files of soldiers. The major shut the doors of the palace, and carried off the keys.*

After such an attempt against the persons, and under favor of the consternation which it must produce, Brienne and Lamoignon hastened to strike the great blow. A solemn bed of justice was opened at Versailles, on the 8th of May. All hearts were embittered, and the speech of the monarch, instead of soothing them, only wounded them the more. He spoke in a brief, imperious tone; he censured sharply the digressions, of which the parliament of Paris had set an example to the other courts. Lamoignon spoke in his turn, to justify the edicts which were about to be presented, three of which were to remain celebrated.

The first took from the parliament the cognizance of criminal proceedings which implicated priests or nobles, and that of civil affairs below twenty thousand livres, which were to be adjudicated without appeal, and in the last resort, by forty-seven grand bailiwicks which were established in the kingdom, in order thus to render justice more expeditious and less costly.

The second effaced the last traces of the periods of ignorance and barbarity from our criminal code. It resembled an echo resounding from the voice of the philosophers. A ray from the genius of Voltaire had finally glided into the depths of those dark proceedings, whose vague, unintelligible forms had no longer any sense, but for the executioner. A thought of toleration penetrated those asylums of terror, in which accused persons had been seen trembling so often without protection, before judges who were without pity. Lamoignon abolished by his edict the interrogatory upon the *culprit's stool*, which alarmed and weakened the accused; the *preliminary examination*, which, wrenching from grief the pretended secrets of conscience, forced the unfortunate to calumniate their own souls, to sustain their bodies. He prohibited the use of those questions of a homicidal brevity, and *other resulting cases in the proceedings*, barbarous protocols, whose style was still less French, than the sentiment

which dictated them. He ordered the judge to specify the crimes, that it should be at least possible to compare them with the punishments. "In future," said the keeper of the seals, "the crime must be stated in the process. If the punishment follows the crime, the crime must be showed by the side of the punishment." He finally announced that when an accused person should be recognized as innocent, the king, in the absence of all other resource, would recompense him out of his own domains. Thus the compilation of our criminal laws reflected the luminous writings of the Servans, the Dupatys, the Brissots,* the admirable speeches of the defender of Calas, the immortal book of Beccaria. Humanity served as the preamble to justice.

The parliament listened respectfully and silently to the reading of those new laws whose wisdom was evident. But the edict which roused indignation and murmurs was that, which, reviving a gothic institution of the old monarchy, re-established† a *plenary court*, a supreme court, which alone was hereafter to be charged with the registry of the taxes and laws. The grand chamber of parliament was admitted into it to the exclusion of the inquests; there were besides introduced into it princes of the blood, peers of the kingdom, the chancellor, the grand officers of the crown, two marshals of France, prelates, governors of provinces, ten counsellors of state or masters of request, four distinguished persons, to be selected by the sovereign. The parliaments of the provinces were only represented in it by one member from each. Thus submitted to the influence of ministers, and placed beneath the hand of the prince, the plenary court had only the appearance of a bureau of courtiers whose functions would be to cover the scandal of a too complaisant adhesion by the hypocrisy of control.

On the same day on which this famous bed of justice was held, the parliament was declared to be in vacation, and the palace closed. The great chamber which had besides orders to remain in Versailles, not knowing where to meet, wandered for some time about the city, and ended by meeting, not in a tennis court, but in a tavern.‡ The great chamber was inclined to submission. It appears certain, that a few days before holding the bed of justice, the keeper of the seals, Lamoignon, had already sounded the most influential members at a splendid dinner, at which Robert de Saint-Vincent was present. The president d'Aligre was gained over, and they awaited the opinion of the old Jansenist, when suddenly striking his forehead, as if to draw the lights of his conscience from it, he pronounced against the innovations of the minister.§

Be this as it may, the old magistrates of the great chamber, bound by the oath of the 3d of May, pledged themselves never to accept any functions "in the new court called *plenary*." In vain did the king en-

* See les discours sur l'administration de la justice criminelle, published by Servan, in 1768; le mémoire pour trois hommes condamnés à la roue, by which Dupatay saved the lives of the three accused, and la théorie des lois criminelles, published by Brissot, in 1780.

† The law was styled, Edit portant rétablissement de la cour plénière.

‡ Mémoires de Weber, t. 1. p. 219.

§ Notes communicated by an old counsellor to M. Eugene Labaume, see his Histoire monarchique et constitutionnelle de la Revolution Française, t. 2. p. 234.

deavor to hold a royal session in his apartments, to confirm in it his will of the preceding evening; the great chamber persisted, and by affirming the energy of his resolutions, Louis the Sixteenth did but betray his weakness. He must dismiss these intractable parliament men, who were unwilling to become themselves the masters of the state, or that he should become their master.

The edict about the plenary court threw Paris into rumors. Jokes abounded as usual, but this time they were bitter, and there was anger in the public laugh. It would be a fine sight to see edicts registered by the master of the horse! the suitableness of the taxes judged of by the captain of the guards. On running over the list of the members of the plenary court, some one had said, "Ah, me, this is the king's levee,"* and the phrase was repeated because it was just. It was not doubted that it was his intention to elude the States General, and that the plenary court had been instituted in their place. Now, what was this representation of France, appointed quietly in the boudoirs of the petit Trianon?

The provinces took fire, and we may thus judge how necessary it was that a great revolution should come, which should bring the benefit of unity to France. For if burgherism, if the people anathematized the plenary court, because it was an attempt at ministerial despotism, the resistance of the nobility and the parliaments took an entirely different character; the men of the robe and the sword rose against the plenary court through the spirit of federalism, and because it was an effort towards unity. Thus the parliament of Besançon risked this sacrilegious affirmation, "The laws of a vast kingdom should not be *uniform*."† On its side the Bearnese nobility invoking, from the top of the Pyrennees, the remembrance of Henry the Fourth, dared to say, "We demand our *contract*, and the faith of the oath of a king whom we love."‡ The nobles of Brittany expressed themselves in still bolder terms. Through the Count de Brotherel the advocate general syndic of the estates of Brittany, they demanded formally the execution of the marriage contract of King Louis the Twelfth and the Duchess Anne, in regard to the liberties and particular customs of the provinces.§ "To attack the parliament," exclaimed the orator of the presidial of Rennes, "is to violate the contract of union."|| That is, the true crime of the founders of the plenary court, was, in the eyes of the gentlemen and members of parliament of the province, to wish to destroy the anarchical diversity of the local jurisdictions, to wish to create a common country for all Frenchmen.

Strange thing! the establishment of the plenary court had only one side on which it was really unattackable, and it was against that, that they struck. What they did not pardon the approvers of the recent enact-

* Journal des Evénements du mois de Mai, 1788.

† Introduction aux fastes de la Revolution, par Marrast et Dupont, p. 12.

‡ Mémoires Historiques et Politiques, t. 6. p. 203.

§ Protestation du procureur général syndic des états de Bretagne. This document, and all we have occasion to cite concerning the troubles in Brittany, are a part of a valuable collection of official papers, with which we have been obligingly furnished by General Thiard.

|| Speech of René François Drouin—Extrait du Register des deliberations de la Compagne du presidial de Rennes.

ments was, for having said "that the kingdom required but one law, one registry."* Thus met these two enemies; on the one side was ministerial despotism, on the other federalism.

The second of these two mischievous forces was no less opposed than the first to the genius of the Revolution; but the monarchy had so wearied the kingdom, that every thing emanating from it appeared to be suspected; its ministers had, until then, so cruelly abused their arbitrary power, that the people unhesitatingly took sides with the parliament. Thus the cause of federalism was here concealed behind the question of right. Were not the parliaments in the place of the States General? Still better, did they not represent the nation? Was not their annihilation placing the monarchy for ever beyond the reach of all species of control? Behold with what specious pretexts provincial federalism covered its revolt. The people were deceived, drawn along as they were besides by an ardent desire for agitation, and the strange, unheard-of sight was seen of revolutionary passions pressing themselves into the service of a counter revolutionary thought.

In Brittany this alliance had something brilliant about it. The news of the edicts of Lamoignon had no sooner reached Rennes, than all the bodies of the city grouped themselves around the parliament; the company of the presidial, the royal seat of the *maitrise* of the waters, the community of advocates, the faculty of law, the chapter of the church at Rennes, the officers of the burgher militia, the association of students, the commission of the states for navigation, the consulate. The general cry was that which urged the dean of the advocates, Guy le Chapelier, (that same Le Chapelier who, in the national assembly, struck so rude a blow at past times,) to say, "May our ancient constitution be guaranteed against all attacks."† . . . Thus, when on the 10th of May, 1788, at seven o'clock in the morning, the commandant and intendant of Brittany, the Count de Thiard and Bertrand de Molleville, presented themselves at the palace, to have the edicts violently registered, there was a furious movement through the whole city. Having reached the doors of the chambers, after having ranged the guard under the arches and upon the steps, the commissioners of the king were subjected to a thousand insults. The crowd having entered with them, jostled them and pursued them with contemptuous clamors.‡ Before receiving them, the magistrates sent their chief register to demand their letters of credit, and they were compelled to wander about for some time in the great hall and the corridors, a sport for subalterns.§ Admitted at last, but not until they had been obliged to have recourse to threats, they had the humiliation to see the court cover itself as they entered, and the magistrates remove from the place where they were to seat themselves. The popular indignation awaited them on their departure, and it broke out impetuously against them, or at least against Bertrand de Molleville; for the

* *Courier de l'Europe.*

† *Speech of Le Chapelier in the collection of General Thiard.*

‡ *Précis de ce qui s'est passé au palais à Rennes, le 10 Mai, 1788. Chambre assemblée, à Rennes.*

§ *Ibid. et Mémoires de Weber, t. 1. p. 222.*

Count de Thiard had always displayed as much moderation as military firmness, and their hatred was addressed especially to the intendant.* Scarcely had he passed the circuit of the troops which invested the palace, than terrible imprecations resounded. A lasso was several times thrown at him, and he was struck on the head by a stone.† The multitude increased, the youth of the schools hastened there, and several wrenching their bayonets from the soldiers, the struggle was commencing, when [a generous officer of the regiment of Rohan, the Chevalier Blondel de Nouainville, springs towards the multitude, casts his sword away and exclaims, "My friends, we are not murderers—I am a citizen, like you. Soldiers, halt." This noble burst changed the dispositions of the crowd at once. They surround the officer and embrace him, and he is raised upon the shoulders of the people. But the soldiers, deceived by the demonstration, become alarmed and engage in combat. In the midst of the *melee*, Nouainville was wounded in the cheek. He immediately exclaimed, showing his wound, "it is only my blood," and again he appeases the revolt. But the troubles were not long in being renewed, and the nobility of Brittany drew up, in the form of a protest, a regular accusation against the ministers, Brienne and Lamoignon.

"The first crime of the mayors of the palace," it said, "was to overthrow the laws, the second to usurp the throne. At less distant periods, the Cardinal de la Balue, that model of ingratitude, did not fear to betray at once his king and his benefactor. The Cardinal Richelieu caused the most illustrious blood to flow, and enchained the nation, only to subdue the monarch to his will. The Cardinal Mazarin excited the people and deprived France of the aid of a hero solely for the purpose of robbing the treasury of the state. . . . These crimes prove how wise it is to oppose to them bodies of magistrates too vigilant to allow the truth to be concealed from them, and too numerous to permit their being seduced."‡

Nothing could be more skilful than this memorial. The question of federalism was carefully masked in it, that of ministerial despotism alone set forth.

The nobles of Brittany did not, however, confine themselves to written protests. They sent twelve of their number as deputies to the king, the Counts de la Fruglaye, de Guer, de Nétumières, de Bec-le-Lièvre, the Marquis de Montlac, de Trémergat, de Carné, de Bédée, de la Rouarie, de la Féroniere, and the Viscount de Cicé. Brienne threw them insolently into the Bastille.

In Dauphiny as Brittany, the parliament had the anger of the people with them. But the resistance, commenced in a tumult, ended by giving birth at Grenoble to scenes full of grandeur.

Clermont Tonnerre, the commandant in Dauphiny, having received orders to exile the parliament, the *tocsin* sounded, and from bell to bell carrying the alarm to the summit of the neighboring mountains, brought down from them robust and intrepid men, who filled the city with their boldness. The guard of the commandant was dispersed, and his hotel

* Ibid. et Mémoires de Weber, t. 1. p. 222.

† Ibid.

‡ *Mémoire de la noblesse de Bretagne au Roi*, sent to the Count de Thiard on the 26th of May, 1788.

soon invaded. Some of them seized the duke by the collar, threatening to hang him to the lustre of his saloon. An axe was raised above his head, and turned aside by an officer; it remained suspended until he had signed the order which revoked the exile of the parliament. But the parliament rejected those advances of an emeute which it feared, and went into exile.

Then appeared Mounier, the friend of Necker, a systematic admirer of English institutions, and who was one of those men who wish strongly for the little for which they do wish. Disturbed by the bearing of the troubles, and convinced of the necessity of regulating their action, he formed around him a committee consisting of the most influential members of the three orders in the province; and there it was agreed, that a solemn assembly, destined to seal the compact of union among the orders, should be held on the 21st of July, 1788, at Vizille, in the chateau of Lesdiguières, and not far from the tomb of Bayard. The Marshal de Vaux, a rough soldier, whose roughness had caused him to be selected as the successor of the Duke de Clermont Tonnerre, hastened to fill the avenues leading to Vizille with troops. The deputies evinced neither emotion nor astonishment; it was in the midst of bayonets that they proclaimed, with all the majesty and calmness of the right, finally victorious, principles, which were to be partially those of the French revolution. Already, in a declaration drawn up by Mounier, had *the consent of the people, met in national assembly*, been declared to be the constitution of the social state. At Vizille they decreed that the parliament of Dauphiny should be recalled; that all taxes should be refused, if the States General were not convened without delay; that the particular privileges of the province should be sacrificed to the great law of French unity; that the orders of the clergy and nobility in Dauphiny, should form but one chamber, and that the third estate should consist of a number of members, equal to that of the other two orders united.

Thus on all sides did they rise against Brienne. The clergy was no more favorable to him than were the parliaments and public opinion. In an extraordinary assembly of the princes of the church, convened by him, which Thémines, Bishop of Blois, conducted, they uttered remonstrances, in which their egotism was covered by the mantle of the public interest. Taking the part of federalism, they exposed its sad doctrines in these terms: "It is very essential that all countries should observe the laws; it is not that all countries should have the same. The uniformity of a tribunal in France, is no greater an advantage than an uniformity of laws would be." We must, moreover, be permitted to believe, that this censure of the plenary court by the clergy, was but a means of preserving their financial privileges, when they were seen to refuse the small sum of eighteen hundred thousand livres which Brienne asked from them. The property of the clergy belonging to heaven, to tax it, was, according to these bishops, to commit a sacrilege, it was to impose on God.

In the mean time, the loans did not fill up, credit was dead, capital was no longer circulating, and the principal minister, unable to maintain the services but by anticipations constantly enlarging and becoming

hereafter impossible to renew, saw bankruptcy approaching with rapid strides. But whilst his master was passing whole days in the chase, and appeared to fear lest he should be suspected of governing, he, with a firm look and a smiling air, sported at once the vigor of Richelieu and the finesse of Mazarin, saying with a vain-glorious affectation of profundity, "I have foreseen every thing, even civil war."*

It became necessary, however, to calm the nation and satisfy the creditors of the state. Brienne promised the States General for the 1st of May, 1789;† an edict announced to the creditors, that after a suspension of payments of six weeks, they would be paid, three fifths in silver, and two fifths in notes current in commerce.‡ The shadowy army of capitalists immediately becomes alarmed; every one hastens to the bank of discount to change his notes into crowns. But the chest having but a very small part of its funds in coin, a new edict was issued to support it, by authorizing it to pay its notes in bills of exchange, and the bills of exchange in notes. Brienne thus attempted to handle the terrible instrument with which the genius of Law had armed itself in its contests against usury; but having neither the skill of the immortal Scotchman, nor his correct eye, nor his great soul, how could the Archbishop of Toulouse have saved himself, where the greatest of financiers had perished?

A minister, who to the wrong of having closed the chapter of profusions, adds that of being at the end of his resources, must naturally have the courtiers against him, who are accustomed to make the public treasury a common purse.§ The Count d'Artois was the first to declare himself; Brienne fell.

Marie Antoinette did not consent to the dismissal of the archbishop without tears; she obtained the hat of a cardinal for him, and loaded him with benefits.

On the news, however, of the fall of the archbishop, the joy of the Parisians was enthusiastic. It redoubled when they learned, a few days afterwards, of the retreat of Lamoignon and the recall of the members of parliament. The Breton prisoners found means to illuminate for an instant the platform of the Bastille. Bonfires and fire works celebrated the triumph of public opinion. But the two ministers burned in effigy, the brutal interference of the soldiery, the fusilade; the rue Meslay, the rue Saint Dominique, the Pont Neuf, the Place de Grève, bloody; several inoffensive citizens, as the romance writer Florian, killed or wounded in the fury of a blind wrath, all these things said plainly, that henceforth the fall of bad powers would be the price of a combat, before becoming the occasion of a fete.

Necker was recalled, and credit was restored through the astonishing prestige attached to his name.|| But whilst all France was applauding,

* Decree of the council of the 8th of August, 1788.

† The form of the edict was, Decree concerning the form of the payments. Rivarol, being consulted by the minister, amused himself by thus designating this financial measure.

‡ We read on this subject, in the manuscript memoirs of Brienne, that Calonne had extorted nine hundred thousand livres from the king, to pay the debts of M. de Vaudreuil.

§ Mémoires de Besenval, t. 2. p. 328.

|| See the picture of the second administration of Necker in Monthyon.

Louis the Sixteenth said sadly; "They made me recall Necker; I did not wish to do so; they will not be long in repenting."

And now, where are we to find in history a prince who has been more completely the puppet of destiny than Louis the Sixteenth? He was to perish by a revolution, and yet long before it laid its hands upon him, behold this revolution attracting, tormenting, fascinating him. There was nothing besides, which could allay the danger; neither concessions, nor prayers, nor threats. He had recourse to the notables; the noise of their debates only added to the general emotion. He addressed the parliaments; they rose and set public opinion on fire. He implored the clergy; they turned aside with pride and contempt. When the court is satisfied, the nation is enraged; when the nation is calmed for a moment, the court murmurs. They laugh at the economies of Louis the Sixteenth, and are indignant at the prodigalities of his ministers. If he employs trick, it disconcerts him; if he employs force, it renders him odious; if he resigns himself to proposing reforms, his initiative is denounced as an usurpation. Submissive to the counsels of an imperious woman, submissive to the voice of a great people awakening, he passes from weakness to anger and gets rid of anger through sloth. What is to be done? The nation, unable longer to be governed, has at last called itself to the government and the States General are promised.

It was thus that the revolution arrived strong in all lawful resentments, and in all the passions which had for several centuries been amassed in the hearts of men. To stop it? It would have been necessary to suppress history to do so.

CHAPTER VII.

MOVEMENT OF THE ELECTIONS.

Universal agitation—Spirit of the nobility, the clergy, the third estate—Public discussions—The Palais Royal—The counsellors of Necker—The second Assembly of the notables—The part of the Parliament finished—Royal decree of the 1st of January—*The New Year's Gifts of the People*—Regulations of the 24th of January—The Elections—The combat between the Nobility and Burgherism at Rennes—Mirabeau in Provence; his portrait—Robespierre at Arras; an unedited letter of Robespierre—Election of the Duke of Orleans—Picture of Paris during the Elections; fetes, misery and famine—The true character of the first *emeute* of the Revolution—A social problem in a revolt.

FROM the 8th of August, 1788, the day on which Brienne, at the end of his expedients, announced the convocation of the States General, until the 5th of May, 1789, the day on which the States General were opened at Versailles, France offers a striking sight; that of a people which after ages of silent monarchy suddenly awakes in the formidable noise of elections. When the assembly afterwards appeared, every thing was attentive to hear it; when it was promised, every thing was in agi-

tation to create it. The agitations and passions which concentrated since in the national representation, broke forth in struggles, imposing from their greatness, seeking and calling to one another from one end of France to the other, filled it with that intrepid restlessness which agitates armies on the eve of great days. There was peace on all the frontiers. There was no alarm of battle without; France was only to be moved by battles within.

How shall we speak of the trouble which seized the nobility? It was then soon seen what that ostentatious protection, that sort of elegant complicity with which the great lords, during the lives of Voltaire and Rousseau, were pleased to surround philosophy, were worth. In that time, they loved to set aside in the shade of their parks, hermitages which they offered gracefully as inspired asylums to thought; princes solicited lectures; the hand of the ladies of the court aided to adorn the cabinet of labor. Courtesy of vanity! For as soon as it became a question of going beyond fashionable good taste; as soon as it appeared, by a solemn decree, that books which it was charming to applaud when the executioner burned them, were becoming assemblies and were about to become laws, the nobility took the alarm, and nought remained of its distinguished protection but its pride. A small minority of the nobles was alone generous and remained calm; the rest gave signs of anger and confusion only.

Encouraged by the smiles of the queen, a noisy staff of angry gentlemen was formed around the Count d'Artois, the Prince de Condé, the Duke de Bourbon, and the Duke d'Enghein, and Louis the Sixteenth afterwards received the *letter of the princes*, drawn up by M. de Monthyon. They declared in it that the kingdom was in danger; they showed in it from afar the majesty of the throne abandoned to the chances of a public debate, the rights of the two first orders injuriously discussed, a mine opened under fortunes and the inequality of property denounced after that of ranks; they spoke in it of a possible protest of the nobles in arms, of an insurrection of the provinces foreseen . . . "Will the king," finally exclaimed these leagued princes, "will the king resolve to sacrifice, to *humble* that brave, ancient and respectable nobility, which has shed so much blood for the country and the kings."*

They answered from the midst of the crowd, "Is the blood of the people water?"

A group of grave lords essayed to oppose the example of a theatrical generosity to the impudent demonstrations of the leaders of the aristocracy; thirty dukes and peers went solemnly to the king to offer to him the abandonment of their pecuniary privileges. But transactions are suspected when necessity commands them, and the genius of revolutions has a right to be suspicious. The people saw a trick in a step which ostentation lessened, the nobility saw a perfidy. French gaiety became mixed with it. "Have you seen the letter of the dupes and peers," was the word of this incident.

* Lettre des princes in the *histoire parlementaire de Messrs. Bucher et Roux*, t. 1. p. 256 et suiv.

But we must have recourse to the cahiers of the nobility to know the true spirit of a majority of the order.*

What did the most of these cahiers taken together demand? Guarantees against the king, the clergy, and the third estate;

Against the king, the suppression of the Bastille, which was formidable to so many gentlemen, the periodical convocation of the States General, the nullity of all taxes not consented to by that assembly;

Against the clergy, the abolition of the tithes, the sale of a part of the property of the church towards the payment of the debt, the extinction of the religious orders; against the third estate, the creation of an *order of peasants*, the consecration of etiquette in the assemblies, the formation of an heraldic tribunal for the verification of titles of nobility, and the right to wear swords to be reserved exclusively to gentlemen.

It granted as its share of devotion; a share in the taxes, but *temporarily*, and on condition they should distinguish the *noble taille*, the abolition of feudal rights, but on the payment of an indemnity at a high price within ten years.

Such were the sentiments of the body of the nobility; and the generosity of some of its members serving only to irritate the pride of the majority, that pride exhibited itself in the melee of passions, in innumerable pamphlets, in tumultuous meetings, in bloody brawls which led whole provinces, like Brittany, to the verge of civil war.

The clergy studied to be serene; for its ministry commanded peace, prescribed self-denial to it. And yet its secret uneasiness was betrayed by the disorder of its wishes and its strange contradictions. Thus, the priests, in their cahiers, humbly avow the scandal of the church, and that discipline is relaxed; but at the same time they attribute the demoralization of the age to the influence of philosophy; and what do they propose to obviate it? That public education should be handed over to them. Independently of matters purely sacerdotal however, the clergy showed truly liberal tendencies. It renounced its privileges, it agreed to an equal assessment of the taxes, it demanded the abolition of obstacles which were onerous to commerce and manufactures, it pronounced in favor of the admissibility of the third estate to all the posts of the robe and the sword which had been reserved until then exclusively for the nobility. Some cahiers expressed a touching wish, a wish that the tools of the poor man should never be seized, and that the day laborer should alone, in France, be freed from taxation. We do not forget that the clergy had in its bosom high dignitaries, and mere curates, a nobility and a people.

Among the third estate, the enthusiasm was at its height. The activity of intellect and daring reigned there; from thence the trouble and generous inspirations mounted towards the superior orders; there only was it a question of victory; elsewhere they were organizing only for defeat, arranging only for death.

When Brienne had said in the decree, in which he promised the States

* We must consult the Comparative Table of Grille, Paris, 1825, to know how different were the wishes expressed in the cahiers of the two orders of the nobility and clergy. It will be easily conceived that we have here given but the dominant color of the expressed opinions.

General, "all the savants and educated persons of the kingdom, and especially those who compose the academy of inscriptions and belles lettres, in the good city of Paris, are invited to address information and memorials upon the objects contained in the present decree to the keeper of the seals,"* the minister did not certainly expect such an overflow of research and ideas. He interrogated knowledge, passion replied. But it was, that very thing which was to make the grandeur of those days; knowledge was passion.

Kersaint, in the *Bon Sens*; Brissot, Clavière, Condorcet, Target, Cerutti, Antonelle, Volney in the *Moniteur*; Thouret and Servan, the one at Rouen, the other in the south; Mounier in Provence, ardently invoked the right of the third estate, spoke eloquently of justice, right and reason. In the *Orator for the States General*, a pamphlet whose vehemence obtained a great success for it, Carra was indignant at the name of subjects being given to the members of the assembled states; he recalled that the nation was the true sovereign, and the king only its delegate. Concise, energetic pamphlets, picturesque proclamations passed from shop to shop, from street to street, reached the villages, and notwithstanding vigilant alarms penetrated to the hearth of the poor,—*advice to the Parisians—advice to the public—advice to honest people—the mode of assembling*.† These texts were fully commented upon, and carried the emotion of the learned to the crowd. Advocates gave, in the form of memorials, consultations for the cause of the third estate.‡ The physician Guillotin, whose name was to baptize the scaffold, drew up a *petition of the citizens of Paris*, signed by the six bodies of merchants, and offered for signatures at the offices of the notaries. The parliament immediately summoned the notaries and the drawer up of the writing to its bar; but the popular excitement had something so imperious about it, that the parliament dared not show severity, and even muttered eulogies. Writers went every day from Paris, to spread the inflammation of the capital through the provinces. Volney established himself at Rennes. Mangourit published the *Herald of the Nation*, and stirred up Brittany. Cerutti wrote, "The people is the only body which does not live by abuses, and sometimes dies of them."§

We shall soon see the Palais Royal become the principal hearth of these actors. Its three long galleries constructed by the Duke of Orleans, its alleys of young lindens replacing the sombre avenues of the chesnut trees, will become the permanent rendezvous of the crowd. In the garden of the prince, at once a camp and a forum, unknown tribunes will mount chairs, and read ephemeral pieces to the people, destined to be commented upon with applause or hisses. But the Palais Royal had not yet acquired its stormy celebrity. Already however numerous shops of booksellers, provided with all the new pamphlets, made it the library of the passions; it already promised a theatre to two orators whom the popular scenes will cause to pass before us, the Marquis of Saint Huruge,

* Collection des lois, par Duvergier, t. 1. p. 2.

† Sallier, Annales Françaises, p. 237 et suiv.

‡ Ibid. p. 236.

§ Mémoire pour le peuple Français.

who left Charenton some years since, and spoke of liberty with the wrath of the prison, and Camille Desmoulins, who, by his fiery youth and the sallies of his Athenian wit, was beginning to charm that revolution of which he was the victim, sprightly inconsistent and light even on the scaffold.

Two questions were beginning to occupy the mind.

Would the third estate number alone as many deputies as the other two orders united?

In the assembly of the States General, would the vote be taken by orders or by heads?

What, should not twenty-five millions of Frenchmen have as many representatives as some hundreds of privileged persons! What! on one side, a caste, a single interest under two forms; on the other, a thousand different interests, agriculture, commerce, manufactures, the bar, the universities, the administration; here one voice or at most two; there a thousand voices to be heard. . . . And did they dare to contest for this so important, numerous, multiplied and active a body as the third estate a representation equal to that of the two orders which expressed but the ideas of the altar and of arms?

Without doubt, the publicists of the nobility and clergy replied, equality of representation might be granted to the third estate, if it consented to deliberate by orders; but did it not claim deliberation in common, the vote by heads, and of what importance then is not this doubling of the third estate?

We may conceive how easy it was for Mounier, Malonet, the writers of burgherism to refute these vain arguments. The doubling of the third estate was decisive; it was impossible to deny it; but was it not reasonable and just that it should be so? What abuses would be corrected by three chambers deliberating separately, and having each a *veto* on the others? Was it not folly to permit to those who profited by the evil, the faculty of arresting the good by their opposition? What means besides would there be of arriving at unity through so many invincible obstacles, as the antagonism of three sovereign chambers would create? It was impotence itself, and impotence from anarchy.

A terrible book sprung from these debates.

Chamfort had abandoned this expressive dialogue to the controversies of the saloons. "What is the third estate? Every thing and nothing." From this sprung the celebrated work of the Abbé Sieyès. The privileged orders? Sterile branches, good to cut off. The third estate was *every thing*; it had been *nothing*; it demanded to be *something*; and in a brief, dogmatical, sententious treatise, the three fatal expressions returned unceasingly, like the words of a text in a passionate sermon. The political priest took up sharply and imperiously the questions which had been debated, and he treated them in a lofty style, in the name of the church and of reason. "You hold your nobility by conquest, you say; well, the third estate will become noble by conquering in its turn."*

* Qu'est ce que le tiers état, chap. 2. p. 13. Second edition corrected, 1789. This pamphlet is now very scarce.

Another publication which the times produced, was that of the *Memoir on the States General*, by Avenel, Count d'Entraigues, a gentleman of Vivarais. "We, who are as valuable as you, we promise to obey you, if you maintain our rights; if not, not." Such was the inscription the author had borrowed from the traditions of Arragonese liberty.

The third estate had these books on its side, the nobility had the parliament. Called to register a declaration of the king which announced the approaching convocation of the States General, the parliament added, *according to the form observed in 1614*. An imprudent clause, which finally unveiled the secret tendencies of the members of parliament and exposed the falsehood of their patriotism. Their recent popularity then fell off in the wink of an eye, and the order of the nobility received nothing from the aid the magistracy was to lend it, but redoubled sarcasms and attacks. Learning, in fact, immediately became an army. What had occurred in 1614 was sought after with avidity, and examples were found in history, out of which new arguments were made. In 1614, the third estate had spoken to the king on their knees; must they then go down on their knees in 1789? In 1614, the orator of the third estate having dared to compare the three orders to three brothers, M. de Senecey, the president of the order of the nobles, complained to the king of the comparison as a frightful scandal;* was another Baron de Senecey to rise at the approaching states, and protest against all speaking about fraternity? In 1614 the nobility had demanded that different dresses should distinguish the different classes of the nation, that plebeians should be prohibited from having fire-arms and dogs which were not houghed; were they to resume these insolent petitions?

Thus the combat was everywhere.

Whilst France, with this impetuosity of spirit, appeared to be preparing an arena for future assemblies, the government was irresolute and troubled. Should they allow the course of ideas and things to flow on tranquilly? What were they to reply to so many contrary wishes? And when finally an assembly should appear before the throne, carrying all the storms of public opinion in its flanks, would it abandon itself to its own transports?

Men, inspired with small prudence, as Malonet, Mounier, the Archbishop of Bourdeaux, (M. de Cicé,) the Bishop of Langres, (M. de la Luzerne,) surrounded Necker with their apprehensions and remonstrances. To confide the to-morrow to chance, was to make an adventure of revolution. No, no, encroachments must be prevented, a frame imposed on the wished-for reforms; it was necessary that on the very first day, the minister should lay on the marble of that tribune they were about to give to the audacity of the new spirit, a liberal but limited and inflexible programme, warning the assembly that solutions not problems, belonged to it, and that they must not go beyond it. The torrent thus restrained and directed, would pass on, carrying away abuses, without sweeping off the monarchy. The government must give the initia-

* Procès-verbal de la Noblesse aux états de 1614, cited by Sièyes, at the end of his pamphlet on privileges.

tive of its will. If it did not, the revolt might become the government itself, and then all doors were open to the unknown.

Strange counsellors, who recommended force to exhaustion. We have seen how many means, now apparently wise, now violent and extreme, the monarchy had tried to sustain itself. If it had not been absolutely powerless in them, if it had not felt itself incapable of peaceably adding the future to the past, it would not have called for aid. Its want of foresight was here but the forced result of its weakness. The unknown was not only its terror; it was also and especially its misery.

Thus the royalty moved with constantly increasing emotion to the solemn rendezvous. Necker, who had a decided leaning to the forms of the English constitution, was not, however, without a vague uneasiness. The alarm of Louis the Sixteenth was visible. The opening of the states was first fixed for the month of May, 1789, then advanced to the month of January, then sent back to the month of April, and finally ordered for the 4th of May; they hesitated about the time, because they hesitated about the thing, and the financier Necker allowed it to be too visible that he regarded the date as a falling due of a note.

A very unexpected ordinance served to betray the secret of the uneasiness of power; it was announced on the 6th of November, 1788, that there would be a second convocation of the notables. Why this small assembly before the great? Not daring to determine grave questions, Necker had been very anxious to diminish, as much as possible, his share of the responsibility in the events which were announcing themselves. The notables were to serve him as a last proof of the possible flights of public opinion. Now the experience was decisive in favor of the revolution, from the very resistance of the notables; for as soon as it was seen that with the exception of a single bureau, that of the Count of Provence, they rejected the doubling of the third estate, all France resounded with furious clamor. Addresses flowed in to the king from all the provincial municipalities and all the corporations. And how could they not have yielded to so general and impetuous a movement? Louis the Sixteenth, who dreaded it, could not at times prevent himself from submitting to it; and when they came to announce to him that only voice was given among the notables for the doubling of the third estate, he said, with an honorable though perhaps involuntary vivacity, "let them add mine."*

Parliament then essayed to regain its lost popularity, and suddenly made a decree by which it hoped that the recent decision of the notables would set off its liberal intentions. It complained of not having been understood, it recalled the wishes it had emitted for an equal assessment of the taxes, the establishment of the responsibility of the ministers, the consecration of personal liberty, etc. . . . But it was too late. The privileged orders were indignant, burgherism mocked at the parliament, and the king received it at Versailles, so as to make it feel that its part was over.

* Beauchamp, *vie de Louis Sieze*, cited by Labaume, *Hist. de la Revolution Française*, t. 2. p. 325.

Necker, determined to proceed, convened the council on the 27th of November, 1788. The queen, contrary to custom, had been invited to the deliberation.*

The minister explained that the cause of the third estate would always have public opinion on its side, being bound up with generous aspirations, the only one it was permitted to express loudly. He added that there was a multitude of things about which the third estate was exclusively informed, as commercial transactions for example, the state of the manufactures, the most suitable means to encourage them, the public credit, the interest of the circulation of money, the abuse of the collections, etc. . . . Necker asked them to hearken to "that deep noise from all Europe, which favored confusedly all the ideas of general equity."† He proposed and carried popular measures, and it is but justice to Marie Antoinette to say, that she assented then to the decisions claimed by the public interest.

A royal decree appeared on the 1st of January, 1789, which "taking into consideration the advice of the minority of the notables, the opinion of several princes of the blood, the wish of the assembly of Dauphiny, the demand of several assemblies and provincial deputations, the advice of various publicists, and the wish expressed by a great number of deputies, ordered that the number of the deputies should be at least one thousand; that they should be formed from a reasonable compound of the population and contributions of each bailiwick, and that the number of deputies of the third estate should be equal to that of the two first orders united."

The enthusiasm surpassed known proportions; at Paris they illuminated as after a victory. Alluding to the date, the 1st of January, 1789, Barrère said in his memoirs, "It was the new year's gift of the people."‡ The pamphlets of the nobility, their lamentations and cries of fury were drowned in an irresistible, immense acclamation.

The question of the vote by orders or head was not yet settled; but the doubling of the third estate was enough to give a presentiment of the issue, and revealed sufficiently the wishes of the minister, since the vote by orders would have rendered the doubling the third estate completely illusory. We must say here that Necker exhibited a want of frankness and courage. His convictions should have prevented him, who laid the premises, from leaving the dangers of the conclusion to the approaching assembly.

It was not until the 24th of January that the regulations for the elections of the States General were published.

The day of the elections so impatiently waited for, at last arrived. The enemies of the revolution after having in vain attempted to prevent them, had no other resource left, but to render them bloody and corrupt them.

The regulations of the 24th of January were very confused, and the chaos of old France was reflected in them as in a mirror. The election was, here direct, there two degrees removed, in other places three, and even four. By virtue of certain distinctions, still respected remains of

* De Barante, Notice sur M. de Saint Priest, p. 91.

† Rapport de Necker.

‡ Mémoires de Barrère, t. 1, p. 380.

feudal rights, the nobles owning fiefs had a privilege refused to simple nobles; that of being represented by proxy.* On their side, the ecclesiastics possessing benefices were better treated than the others, the first having personally the electoral right, whilst the second met at the house of the curate of the parish, chose one elector for every twenty votes.† There was besides no absolute exclusion except of domestics and for the advantage of the independence of the votes. The right of participating in the elections, either directly or indirectly, was recognized in every Frenchman, of the age of twenty-five years, who had a domicile, and was comprised in the roll of direct taxation for *some* contribution.‡ There was no restrictive condition on eligibility, and the permission was granted to the third estate, to choose its representatives out of all the orders. It was not direct universal suffrage, but it was universal suffrage.

France, which was destitute of electoral experience, went to work ardently to study the mechanism of elections as the regulations of the 24th of January defined them.

The convocation was neither uniform nor simultaneous throughout the whole kingdom. Each bailiwick was to be called together by special letters. The first on these bears date of the 9th of February, and is addressed to the province of Alsace, the last addressed to the country of the Quatre Vallées, is dated the 3d of May, 1789.§ Paris proceeded to its elections after all the provinces, and did not finish them until after the States General had opened.

The electoral movement then began through all France. Hours of excitement, anxiety and hope. Necker awaited the result with an immoveable countenance, but a disturbed heart. He had wished to leave the elections free,|| and to withdraw his hand from these formidable urns. The royalty, however, which he pushed forwards, but did not rule absolutely, took its precautions; the governors of the provinces received orders to go to their posts; the subalterns redoubled their vigilance, and the uniform of the soldier was seen glittering on the road of that crowd, bid to the conquest of civil sovereignty.

The nobility arrived, highly irritated against the minister. The candidates presented their hatred as a pretension. From thence arose in the feudal assemblies, according to a writer of the same party,|| a very common indecency, frivolous tumults, scandals. Let us add, that the provincial nobles every where opposed those of the court, rejecting the great lords with a species of alarm; "they would traffic, they said, with the interests of the nobility."***

The elections of the clergy showed also two very distinct parties, the bishops and the curates; but there was this difference between the two orders which it is important to note, that those of the nobility who were suspected of patriotism and philosophy were the great lords, whilst in the church, it was the modest curates, the simple priests.

* Articles 16 and 17 of the regulations of the 24th of January.

† Articles 12 and 14. ‡ Article 25.

§ Bouchez et Roux, Hist. parlementaire, t. i. p. 297.

|| Mémoires de Clermont-Gallerande, t. i. p. 62.

** Mémoires de Ferrières, t. i. p. 3.

The Count de Clermont-Gallerande avows, that in calmness and dignity, the assemblies of the third order contrasted strongly with those of the other two. There were in them but one mind and one heart. Every thing tended to liberty. Liberty! Powerful and mysterious word which united souls, so long as it was not defined. But the definition was only to come afterwards; then all who pronounced it confounded their enthusiasm in it.

It even happened that in the midst of the electoral melee, men of opposite opinions exchanged fraternal hopes and courtesy. "I have taken," said Maury to Bailly, "an apartment at Versailles; you will eat daily with me, and we will unite to do good."* They did not unite, they combated.

The elections in several provinces verged on civil war. The nobility which regarded the new spirit as a conspiracy, had determined to conspire in its turn, and in the middle of the year 1788, Dauphiny, Brittany and Bearn, had entered into secret negotiations to form a league, which was to extend through all France.† But the energetic attitude of the third estate, disconcerted this plan.

Brittany was, as we know, a province which had estates, and these met at Rennes as usual on the 30th of December, 1788. But how had their physiognomy changed since that letter of Madame de Sévigné? "The states cannot be long in session, they have only to ask what the king wishes, they say nothing, behold what is done. . . An infinity of presents, pensions, the repairs of roads and cities, fifteen or twenty great tables, a continual play, eternal balls, theatricals three times a week, great luxuriousness, such were the states. It appears if all idlers had been metamorphosed into gentlemen."‡ The nobility now appeared full of fury. Then also, as in the days of the marchioness, the third estate made but a small figure in the states, being represented by only forty-seven members, five of whom had not a deliberative voice; and these even were not freely chosen, and were there but in their capacity of mayors and municipal officers,§ whilst all the idlers were metamorphosed into gentlemen, who were only required to be twenty-five years old to appear.

The decree of the 27th of December, which willed that in the electoral assemblies, the third estate should be represented by numbers equal to that of the two others combined, had not yet reached Brittany, but the opinion of the king's council concerning it was known. The third estate at Rennes then demanded equality in the representation. It claimed, moreover, the vote by heads, and an equal assessment of the taxes, in conformity, they said,|| with secret instructions from Necker, declaring firmly, that it would take no part in any deliberation, until these just points had been rendered to it. The nobility are at once excited, burgherism stands firm, the neighboring cities become attentive,

* Mémoires de Bailly, t. 1. p. 3.

† L'Ami du roi, des Français, de l'ordre, etc. par Montjoie, partie première, chap. 9. p. 47.

‡ Madame de Sévigné, lettres écrites des Rochers.

§ Mot d'un cosmopolite sur les démêlés entre la noblesse de Bretagne et le Tiers et al. p. 43, in 8vo. 1789.

|| L'Ami du Roi, etc., par Montjoie partie première, chap. 8. p. 39.

both parties prepare for the contest. In this state of things, appeared a decree of the king's council, which, to cut short violence, adjourned the assembly to the 3d of February, and ordered the deputies of the third estate to go to their municipalities to seek for newer and ampler powers.

But the nobility had taken its stand; it protests, it swears it will absent itself, if the old forms are not preserved; it addresses many factious appeals to the people of the country; it declares every one a traitor to the province, who shall not devote himself to the maintenance of its privileges. The third estate retire, with their president at their head.

The nobility, however, deliberated tumultuously. Soon, emboldened by the support of the parliament, it thought itself strong enough to try the fortune of seditions, and sent a cohort of lackeys and sedan bearers* through the city, instructed to cry out that bread was too dear, and that it was the fault of the bourgeois. Driving peaceful citizens before them and striking and abusing them, this crowd ran to demand justice from the magistrates. The members of parliament were in their robes on their seats; they heard the emeute and refused to hear the victims. The young men of Rennes then took up arms. They recognized disguised gentlemen among the factious, they become indignant, and they encamp on the public places.† Suddenly a workman, whom the people of the nobility had struck, arrives, calling for aid, and covered with blood. Every thing is in commotion; they hasten to the hall of the states. The gentlemen were coming out at the time; attacked, they lay their hands upon their swords, and blood flows. Two nobles were killed, one of whom was a youth of eighteen, who fell at the feet of his father. It is war. The tocsin sounds, women appear in the melee; the Count de Thiard, the commandant of the province, mingles among the combatants and obtains a truce for the strife with great difficulty. Six hundred gentlemen took refuge in the cloister of the Cordeliers, and divided into companies, awaited there an attack. The crowd hastened thither tumultuously, and surrounded the enclosure. Some spoke of setting it on fire, so as to force the nobles to fight them in the streets; others wished to have recourse only to the excitements of insult. The siege lasted for three days, and the issue threatened to be terrible, when the Count de Thiard was enabled finally to calm the irritation of the parties. A kind of military capitulation was assented to. The crowd opened raging, and the nobles, sallying forth with no other arms than their swords, regained their hotels, from whence they were not long in starting for the country.

Every thing appeared terminated by this emigration into the country; but the news had spread far and wide, and troops of armed young men hastened in from Nantes, Saint-Malo, Saint-Briene, Angers, with carts filled with provisions and munitions of war. Eight hundred Nantese took military occupation of Rennes, and at the same time decrees and proclamations were published by the young men of the Breton cities. The protest of the bourgeois of Nantes contained an oath to die rather than to subscribe, in case of arrests to the judgments of an iniquitous

* Précis exact et historique des faits arrivés à Rennes les 26 et 27 Janvier, 1789, p. 13. Certified as true by the deputies of the third estate of Brittany, in court.

† Mot d'un Cosmopolite, p. 16 et suiv.

tribunal. At Angers a paper appeared "in the name of the mothers, sisters, wives and lovers of the young citizens," announcing that they would accompany them every where, look after the baggage, and devote themselves to such cares as women can render to those who are about to fight. Among these youths was a student of law, who was afterwards General Moreau.

The nobility of Brittany felt itself conquered; it thought to avenge itself by refusing to send deputies to the States General. A vain demonstration which was no where imitated and which served only to weaken the order by twenty-one votes.

This impetuous rising of the third estate, which passed from ideas to arms, overthrew the warlike ardor of the nobility through all France, and the immense association which had been dreamed of through the provinces led only to the solidarity of confusion.

Unimportant troubles occurred in Franche-Comté. There, as in Brittany, the third estate claimed equality in the representation, the nobility refused it to them, and the parliament joined the nobles. The decree of the parliament of Besançon contains these curious considerations—"Regarding innovations as dangerous, because the innovating spirit does not stop . . . that the court cannot approve of the pretensions which tend to confound the different orders of citizens; that inequality in the distribution of property is a decree of Providence; that a large portion of the third estate subsists, and will always subsist, only by means of the lands of the nobility, clergy, etc., . . ."* The people insulted the magistrates, the king erased the decree, and the victory remained with the third estate, as in Brittany.

It was the same in Burgundy.†

In Provence, one name summed up the troubles, and it is impossible when mentioning this name for the first time, that history can pass without stopping over it.

A resplendent ugliness, a withered, imposing and livid physiognomy, the effrontery of his lip uniting with the lustre of his eyes, such was Mirabeau. And he carried his soul in his face.

All the good qualities and all the vices of the *tempestuous race* of the Riquetti, appeared to have been confounded and mixed up at chance in him.

What passions pushed him on, and what was his design? We will soon see this double and powerful nature dragging a people despised by him in his train. Full of vehemence and artifice, he will cry up kings with the accent of a tribune; he will dare to call revolt to him, to use it, to lay hold of it, to calumniate it, and alone in his age will he endeavor to carry off the public anger insolently enveloped in his own. The revolutionary daring of Mirabeau was but a burst of pride and egotism. He delighted in recalling his patrician origin, and that Admiral Coligny was his cousin; he had neither the moral vigor nor the virtues from which a love of equality is formed, and the austere image of a republic frightened his corruption from afar. A cold head with a temperament

* Buchez et Roux, Hist. Parlementaire.

† Annales Françaises, p. 284, 285.

of fire, his great ambition would have been to impose himself as the chief of the state, reserve being made for his life deprived of the benefits of disorder; popular movements were importunate to him, and he had a horror of all noise he did not make himself. He presented himself, however, to the elections of the south as the adversary of the nobility, as an agitator; and this can only be explained by his education and the influences of his youth.

His father, as is known, was almost crazy towards him; he had a monomania of hatred for him. His existence had thus been early poisoned. As a child, he was deformed and persecuted; his family denied him and called him in derision, *Monsieur Pierre Buffière*. His first sights were scenes of brutal infidelity and jealousy; the first language taught him was that of injury; and as he grew up, the paternal persecutions kindled more and more the revolt in his blood.

He had already given a frightful idea of himself. At Aire, the local tradition ran, that wishing to marry Mademoiselle de Marignane, notwithstanding the opposition of her parents, he had had recourse to a trick, which was a calumny, and had shown himself one day at ten o'clock in the morning on the balcony of the hotel of the Marignanes, in his robe de chambre and slippers, with his hair in disorder. His vulture-like desires, his amours which showed him hastening to pleasure as to a prey; the mothers in the environs of Manosque, concealing their daughters at his approach; Sophie Monnier, seduced and carried off by him; all this united appeared to furnish his enemies with sufficient arms. But no; as if fortune had wished that such a man should be personally interested in the fall of tyrannical institutions, they chastised the good in him as well as the evil. They did not fear to impute it to him as a crime, that he had avenged the reputation of his sister; and from his merits, odiously interpreted, they pleased themselves with increasing the list of his faults. Led from prison to prison, from Manosque to the Chateau d'If, from the Chateau d'If to the fort of Jouy, compelled to hide, constrained between the terrors of poverty and the tragedies of love to fly, he was pursued into his exile, led forth despotically and confined in the dungeon of Vincennes. And thus he learned to curse the powers unrestrainedly. Persecution framed part for him.

After forty-two months of imprecations he was restored to liberty, that is, to the revolution. Misery tore the last garment from the captive. In covering with snow the small garden which served for his promenades, the winter had made a world of ten feet square for the most active man who ever lived, and the ardor of forgetfulness urged him to excessive labors, admirable or degrading. Now dipping deep into debauchery and now rising to tenderness and writing his letters to Sophia with a pen which the shameful pages of the *Erotica Biblion* had stained, he was forming for himself a heart equally disposed to great things and infamies. Study and sickness had spread before his eyes a cloud which thickened from day to day and from hour to hour; and thinking of that bitter treasury of vengeance which he had to repay, it threw him into despair. For how much more terrible than that of Ossian and Milton would have been the destiny of a blind Mirabeau. It was only necessary to feel, to

strike the lyre, it was only necessary to think, to compose a poem; but to strike, it was necessary to see.

To strike. That was to be henceforth the life of Mirabeau, and he prepared for the struggle of the tribune by a thousand declamations, in which the warrior breathed, by actions which revealed an incomparable orator.

But to fail in respect for its own proper genius, is the last of insolences. Mirabeau did not comprehend this. A libellist for a living, the bitter detractor of Necker, the denouncer of Lavater, the adversary of Beaumarchais, the trumpeter of the suspected figures of Clavière and Pauchand, the advocate of Calonne, he made sport of selling manuscripts already paid for, he placed himself in the pay of some ambitious vulgar persons, he followed the thoughts of another, he merited the reproach of his father; *my son, the merchant of words* Only his bold attitude and his proud airs did not abandon him for a moment. He was a man to give heroic proportions even to baseness.

The revolutionary candidatedship of Mirabeau is thus explained. Tired of his bad reputation and feeling his genius, he determined that the opinion entertained of him should hereafter be replaced by admiration and fear. The noise of an overturned kingdom was pleasant to him as covering the resource of his disorders, and he had the inconceivable pride to think, that he had only to take the revolution into his service, being enabled to rid himself of it, as soon as he had no longer need for it.

It was with this bold thought that he went to Provence. Well determined to combat his own caste, he already divined and braved them. "If the nobility wish to prevent my arrival," he wrote, "they must assassinate me like Gracchus."* He arrived, preceded by a scandal; he revealed to the public the private letters of Carétti, and the indelicate revealer of the confidence of friendship, he had consented that they should publish an almost literal transcript of the diplomatic and secret correspondence of Berlin.† He had, however, scarcely mounted upon the theatre to which his genius called him, when he could write, "The third estate pursues me with marks of confidence and enthusiasm, which are very imprudent for its own cause; for it fills the measure of the anger of the nobles who have all the convulsions of expiring Turnus.‡"

The states of Provence were assembled at Aix, and the nobility protested in them violently against the royal regulation, in regard to the convocation of the States General. Mirabeau, who had a right to a seat in the chamber of the nobles, presented himself in it without hesitation, and his first care was to oppose the pretensions of his order. He was replied to by an insulting decision, which closed the doors against the *nonholders of fiefs*. The blow was to strike him, and he attempted to turn it aside in a speech which he delivered on the 30th of January, 1789, and which is a masterpiece of force, eloquence and reasoning. But the nobility, seized with a vertigo, seemed to delight in irritating

* Lettre de Mirabeau à M. de Comps, cited in the *Mémoires de Mirabeau*, t. 5. p. 224.

† *Mémoires de Mirabeau*, t. 5. p. 212 et 238. Mirabeau had been sent to Berlin in 1786, commissioned to spy out the changes which the death of Frederick the Second, then imminent, was about to produce in the courts of Germany. † *Ibid.* p. 236.

this powerful enemy. He finally broke out on the 5th of February in an adjuration, which is quoted unceasingly and ever will be ; " In every country and in all ages, aristocrats have implacably pursued the friends of the people ; and if, by any combination of fortune, any one of these has been brought up among them, it is he especially whom they have struck, greedy to inspire terror by the choice of the victim. Thus perished the last of the Gracchi by the hand of the patricians ; but struck with a mortal blow, he threw the dust towards heaven, calling on the gods to avenge him ; Marius was born from this dust ; Marius, less great for having exterminated the Cimbri, than for having abated the aristocracy of the nobility in Rome."*

The lot is cast ; the dictatorship of Mirabeau over the third estate is conquered ; popular applause salutes the tribune ; and, rejecting him from its assemblies, the nobility give Marius a successor.

Thus, when after a short journey to Paris, Mirabeau reappeared in Provence, there were unexampled and nameless transports of joy. At Lambese, he found the municipal officers of Aix sent to meet him, to tender to him the homage of the country. The bells rung, the whole city hastened thither. Every one was anxious to approach him, to hear him, at least to see him ; every thing announced in him an indomitable wrestler ; his enormous head of hair, his active embonpoint, his commanding gesture, his countenance devastated by passions, but terrible. They loved in him what they would have detested in another, his birth ; and it was plebeians who cried out at the sight of him, "*Hurrah for Monsieur the Count.*" They were about to unharness his carriage ; but he, ruling the enthusiasm, and full of manly emotion, said, " I understand how men have become slaves, tyranny has grafted itself on gratitude,"† and he added these words, which should never be forgotten : " Men are not made to carry a man, and you carry already but too many."‡ The city of Aix awaited him ; but when he entered, the crowd which impeded his course pressed so tumultuously around, that he was obliged to put his horses to the gallop, thus giving his triumph the air of a flight. The sound of flutes and tambourins was mingled every where with joyous clamors. As soon as he reached his residence an hundred mortars were fired, and he descended into the arms of the people.

At Aix he received the following letter from Marseilles : " A revolt is about to break out. The people have risen against the farmer general. Armed with axes they have broken the doors. They were about to run into the most extreme excesses, when a man appeared who promised to have the price of provisions and bread lowered. The trumpets of the city sounded at once this agreeable news, but which was insufficient to arrest at once so imperious a torrent. . . . Some bakers' shops are about to be sacked. . . . Behold the condition in which we are, Monsieur Count. . . . The astonishing diminution of bread which has taken place, can but pro-

* An autograph minute of Mirabeau, reproduced word for word in his *Mémoires*, t. 5. p. 256.

† Narration communicated by Madame du Saillant to the author of the *Mémoires de Mirabeau*, t. 5. p. 274.

‡ *Mémoires de Mirabeau*, t. 5. p. 275.

duce famine in Marseilles. The bakers will hide their grain if they are not indemnified. Every thing is lost if we must yield, every thing is destroyed if force is employed. . . . When we cannot expect any thing more from men, we must have recourse to the gods!"* Mirabeau went immediately to Marseilles. He had an *advice to the people of Marseilles*, printed, placarded and distributed, he enlightens them on the question of subsistence, and without the crowd's becoming indignant, or without the famine murmuring, he caused the price of bread rashly debased below its real value, to be raised to the point which prudence indicated.

But scarcely had he appeased Marseilles, than still more alarming news recalled him to Aix. The Marquis de la Fare, the consul of the city, had fired upon the people, and the ferment is at its height. Mirabeau arrives, after having visited all the posts at Marseilles on horseback. He sends away the soldiers, confides the guard of the streets to the bourgeois militia, harangues the multitude, and restores them to calmness, *taking the word of honor of the people*.† At Monosque, he saves the Bishop of Sisteron from a popular outbreak. At Toulon, he causes the price of bread to be lowered, and extinguishes a revolt. Governors implore him, cities call him their saviour, seditions obey him. He is more than a king, he is almost a god.

The place of Mirabeau in the States General was thus indicated in advance. Aix and Marseilles both nominated him.

Whilst the revolution in the south appeared to give itself to Mirabeau, a man was chosen in the north, who in consequence of respecting it, deserved to conduct it, Maximilien de Robespierre. Very different from those of Mirabeau, the early years of Robespierre had neither their renown nor their soils. His fellow-citizens chose him for his studious childhood, which had recompensed the state, for some success at the bar, his sincere patriotism, the amenity and integrity of his manners. We have in our possession a precious collection of the unedited and manuscript letters of Robespierre, many of which have reference to the period which immediately preceded his public life,‡ and they are full of cordiality, natural gaiety, and ease. The necessity of overflowing if we may so speak, forms their principal characteristic. A journey of ten leagues, furnished materials in them for a thousand pleasant and careless recitals, for descriptions in the style of Gil Blas. When he speaks in them of himself, it is in a gently mocking tone, like Jean-Jacques, when he recalls the admiration with which Venture inspired him. There are some of those letters in which the courtesy approaches a studied refinement,§ but none which betray an austere nature or the habit of strong

* Lettre de M. Bremont Julien, in the *Mémoires de Mirabeau*, t. 5. p. 287 et 288.

† Lettre de Mirabeau dans les *Mémoires*, p. 304.

‡ We owe this obliging communication to our honorable friend, M. Frederick De-george, principal editor of the *Progrès d'Arras*.

§ Here is one of these letters; as coming from Robespierre it will doubtless appear curious to our readers.

"MADEMOISELLE,

"I have the honor to send you a memorial whose object is interesting. We may render to the graces like homages, when they learn how to join the gift of thinking and feeling to all their agreeable qualities, and are equally worthy of weeping over misfortune and bestowing happiness.

thoughts. And yet Robespierre was no sooner the man of destiny, than his face became careworn, and his soul sombre. . . . But the time has not yet come to paint this figure, which was only so great because the revolution made it in its image.

And how many other names sprung from the public debate, which until then unknown, became afterwards illustrious from eloquence or the scaffold. Rabaud Saint-Etienne, Barhave, the Abbé Gregoire, Cazalès, Camus, Dubois-Crancé, Alexandre and Charles Lameth, Barère, d'Epéménil, le Chapelier. Of the two last, that was the most vehement of the champions of the nobility, this one of the most energetic representatives of the third estate; and a few years after, being condemned together, they met at the foot of the funeral car, and the following dialogue passed between them: "Monsieur, said le Chapelier, they give us a terrible problem to solve in our last moments.—What problem? To know when we shall be upon this car, to which of us their hisses will be addressed.—To both," replied d'Epéménil.* So absolute, logical, and inexorable in its judgments, is the law which governs revolutions.

A prince, the Duke of Orleans, was seen among the candidates. He had addressed *Instructions* to his proxies, in which he demanded the guarantee of individual liberty, the indefinite liberty of the press, the inviolability of letters, the periodical return, and at short periods of the States General, the establishment of divorce, the responsibility of *somebody* in case of infraction of the laws of the kingdom. There followed under the title of *Deliberations to be taken in the assemblies of the bailiwicks*, an enunciation of principles which the duke urged all his attorneys to endeavor to make prevail. The author of the *Deliberations* was the abbé Sièyes, and that of *Instructions* was the Marquis de Simon, the same who afterwards emigrated and drew up the famous manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick.

The profession of faith of the Duke of Orleans excited a very lively emotion. Chosen at Paris, Villars-Coterets and Crespy in Valois, he preferred the latter, because it was in the cahiers of the electors of that country, that the new tendencies had made their strongest impress.

The elections over, a grave question presented itself to be resolved; where were the States General to sit? The council was convened. The

"May I in connection with so serious a subject, Mademoiselle, be permitted to speak of the canary birds? . . . They are very handsome, and we expected that being raised by you, they would be the mildest and most sociable of canaries. What was our surprise on approaching their cage to see them precipitate themselves against the bars with an impetuosity which made us fear for their lives, and such is the trick they commence whenever they see the hand which feeds them. . . . What plan of education have you then adopted for them? And whence comes their savage character? Do the doves which the graces rear for the car of Venus, show this natural fierceness? A face like yours should have easily familiarized your canary birds with human faces. Or it may be that after having seen it, they can no longer bear another? Explain, I beseech you this strange phenomenon. In the meantime we shall always find them loveable with all their defects. My sister in particular, charges me to testify her gratitude to you for your goodness in making her this present. I am with respect, Mademoiselle, etc.

DE ROBESPIERRE.

(Dated in 1788.)

* Biographie Universelle et portative, par Rabbe, Vieilh de Boisjolin et Sainte-Preuve. Art. Le Chapelier.

ministers, uneasy, named several cities in succession, Tours, Blois, Orleans, Cambrai. No one named Paris, for they thought too much of it. Necker finally, with an effort of firmness, designated the capital. All eyes were fixed on the king, who sat motionless on his sofa, and given up to that somnolency which formed, as will be seen, the diplomacy of his uncertainty. It was thought that a long removal would be unpleasant to him as he was, from his natural disposition, averse to long journeys; Compeigne was timidly proposed. There was still the same silence on the part of the king. M. Saint-Priest mentioned Saint-Germain. The king then, rising, said, "No, it had better be Versailles, on account of the chase."* Versailles was then chosen as the theatre of the assembly, on account of the chase.

Paris, the dreaded city, was given up at that moment to the anxieties of liberty and famine. The year, so good for the bourgeois, had been rude for the people. Hail had destroyed the harvests, an extraordinary drought had dried up the wells and fountains, money was scarce, and there was no credit. We may guess what the life of the poor was to be. Excessive cold was added to so many causes of distress. At the close of December, 1788, the thermometer of Reaumur, in Paris, marked eighteen and three quarter degrees below the freezing point. The Seine was a bridge from Paris to Havre. Pity was moved. A letter from the curate of Sainte Marguerite published in the journals, gave alarming figures to public charity. Thirty thousand indigent,† three times the usual number, were counted in the faubourg Sainte Auboine. Several curates opened the archives of misery and drew up funereal catalogues.

Happily the spirit of the gospel was awakened around the churches, and prudence, moreover, made numerous Christians. Food and clothing were distributed; benevolent societies were organized; the archbishop of Paris, M. de Juigné, spent four hundred thousand livres in alms. The Duke of Orleans gave kindly largesses, and his solicitude for the unfortunate was manifested even in his pleasures. He had contracted a taste for betting in England; he bet large sums for the advantage of the poor.‡ Large fires were kindled before the hotels.§

The mortality was, however, frightful. Whilst the Hotel de Ville, the provostship, and the viscountship of Paris were appointing their deputies, famine was marking its victims. On the way to the cemetery, through the crowd of those who were hastening to the ballots, were met those who had been unable to resist famine and cold, mute representatives—the icy representatives of misery. The deputies of the people in rags were the dead. But neither famine, nor the cares nor enjoyments of alms, nor the Revolution which was groaning, had cut short the usual pleasures in the saloons. With an inconceivable want of foresight, those most threatened were the most ardent in literary meetings, feasts of taste, and the war of bon mots. On the 3d of February, 1789, the Viscount de Segur read a poem on the *Art of Pleasing*, at the house of the Viscountess de Sabran. On the 12th of the preceding January, at the house of the same

* Notice sur M. Saint Priest, par M. de Barante, p. 93.

† Journal de Paris du 2d Janvier, 1789.

‡ L'Ami du Roi, etc. chap. 10. p. 57.

§ Lacretelle, Histoire du 18e Siecle, t. 6.

Viscount de Segur, an unknown young man read a tragedy which "moved no one and made all the world marvel."* The title of this tragedy, which was to become an arm of a party, was Charles the Ninth, and the author was named Joseph de Chenier. The questions of the day were treated cheerfully among gentlemen in waggish verses. Some grave voices were sometimes raised, but their prophecies were regarded as pleasantries.

The elections of Paris were organized in the mean time, in accordance with the particular regulations which were adopted for the capital. Contrary to the stated usage of the city, the three orders had been convened separately, and held private meetings. The electoral priests met, usually, in the churches. The order of the nobility was divided into twenty sections; the third estate into sixty arrondissements or quarters.†

All the inhabitants of Paris, born or naturalized Frenchmen, twenty-five years old, and having a domicile, were entitled to assist at the electoral assembly, provided they could show a title of office, grades in a faculty, a commission, or an employment, letters of *maitrise*, or, finally, the payment of a capitation tax amounting to the sum of six livres. An ordinance of the bureau of the city of the 15th of April, provided that a locked box should be placed in the great saloon of the Hotel de Ville, by the side of the chimney, in which all memorials suitable to make known the wishes of the citizens, could be deposited from eight to ten, and from four to six o'clock. It was an appeal to the free circulation of ideas.

It had been determined that the three orders should appoint six hundred representatives;‡ the clergy one hundred and fifty, the nobility one hundred and fifty, the third estate three hundred; that these representatives, having met under the authority of the provost of Paris, should proceed separately, or in common, to draw up their *cahiers* and choose their delegates, who were to be forty in number, ten for the clergy, ten for the nobility, and consequently twenty for the third estate.

Paris then became a hearth of ardent occupations. The greater part of the elections from the provinces were already known; the Journal of Paris furnishing, daily, the names of the newly chosen to the greedy curiosity of the capital. They informed themselves about these men; they sought the destinies of the country in their names. The lists were circulated; the Abbé Sièyes, Condorcet, *though noble*, Target, Tronchet, Guillotin, de Chévier, Pastoret, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Cératti, Chamfort, Lacépède, Lacroix, Servan, Reveillon. Nothing could be more animated than the sight of Paris; the churches, the saloons of the Hotel de Ville, the mayoralties, full of electors; the approaches to the crowded districts; the newsboys running about with their hands full of pamphlets; the public criers giving the news from the provinces; priests and nobles hastening in all directions, the first in carriages, the last on horseback; the soldiery inundating the public places; anxiety painted on all faces, and all hearts open to that great noise of liberty which has so many echoes beneath the sky of Paris.

The occupation with general affairs was so lively and absorbing that scarcely any notice was taken of an accident which then almost cost the

* Mémoires pour Servir à l'histoire de l'Année 1789, t. 1. p. 28.

† Regulations of the 13th of April, Art. 12.

‡ Ibid. Art. 7.

king his life. As he was one day visiting the repairs which were making to that part of the roof which was above the marble court, he made a false step, slipped and struck the balustrade by which the roof was terminated, and had not a tiler, who was accidentally there, been strong enough to hold him, Louis the Sixteenth would have fallen with a frightful, mortal fall.* But it was from a throne that fortune was to hurl him.

The first act of most of the assemblies was to erase the presidents appointed by the Hotel de Ville, and then to rechoose them themselves; the spirit of independence thus announcing itself from the start. The bureaux having been framed, they were occupied first with drawing up the cahiers and then with the nomination of electors, when they met on Sunday, the 26th of April, in the great hall of the archbishop's palace, to choose the forty deputies.

The oath having been taken in common, the nobility and clergy retired to their respective halls. The third estate following a usage signalized by Bailly as very significant,† remained in the hall of the general assemblies.

Among the electors was one, a rich manufacturer of wall-paper of the faubourg Saint Antoine, an old workman, who had attained to wealth after forty-eight years of intelligent labor, and whose manufactory employed four hundred workmen. The rumour was suddenly spread through the suburb, that at the archbishop's palace, where the electors had met to advise about the public good, the unfortunate have one enemy. They are assured that one man has spoken of reducing the wages; that he said "workmen can live on fifteen sols a day." He was named Reveillon. From whence came this rumour? There was remarked mixing with the groups and distributing mysterious words, an Abbé Rey, a royal censor, who, they affirm, is a member of several academies, and the secretary to the count d'Artois.‡ A great rumour. To talk of reducing wages at the close of this cruel winter, was to sound the tocsin. Deep distrusts were, moreover, beginning to peep out; a journal had written, "who can tell us if the despotism of burgherism will not succeed the pretended aristocracy of the nobles?"§ Initiated bands traverse the faubourg Saint Antoine, and go to kindle up the faubourg Saint Marceau. They carry about, amidst hisses, a figure to which they give the name of Reveillon,|| and which they decorate, in derision, with the ribbon of Saint Michael, and carry for judgment to the Grève. Avrillon, Charton, and Santerre, well-known manufacturers, arrive there, despatched by the archbishop, to oppose the disorder with words of kindness;¶ but the tumult proceeds and goes to take up its station before the house of Reveillon. This was the 27th of April.

Reveillon, alarmed, has recourse to the authorities, and demands aid. Thirty men are given to him to protect him against an outbreak.

The house of the manufacturer is assailed about the middle of the

* L'Ami du Roi, chap. 12. p. 80.

† Mémoires de Bailly, t. 1. p. 18.

‡ Hist. de la Revolution, par deux amis de la liberté, t. 1. chap. 7. p. 169.

§ Buchez et Roux, Hist. Parlementaire, t. 1. p. 319.

|| Exposé Justificatif pour le Sieur Reveillon, in the Mémoires de Ferrières aux Eclaircissements historiques, Note A.

¶ Vie politique et privée de Santerre, p. 26.

next day. He himself had only time to take refuge in the Bastille. The thirty soldiers attempt to resist in vain; every thing is invaded. At this moment an old woman attached to the establishment of Reveillon appears on the threshold.* She exclaims intrepidly that the people are deceived, and demands justice and pity. They remove her respectfully, and the fury of the besiegers has full career. They spread through the apartments and the court-yards, break up the furniture, kindle three different fires, and throw the most precious effects into them.†

An unexpected contrast was about to add to the fury of the outbreak. Elegant carriages, ladies and nobles on horseback passed by, going to a fête at Vincennes. The crowd at this sight utters sinister cries, and the brilliant cavalcade disperses in alarm. The Duke of Orleans alone stopped. He descends from his carriage, saluted by warm acclamations, exhorts the crowd to quiet,‡ and continues on his way, uneasy, but happy in his popularity.

The patrol of foot and horse, the regiment of Royale Cravate, the French and Swiss guards, did not appear until there was nothing to do but massacre. After useless summonings, the order for the attack is heard, and the people only reply to it by transports of rage. A frightful scene then began. The French guards having given a rolling fire on four faces,§ unfortunate men were seen to fall from the roofs of houses, the walls were sprinkled with blood, and from the windows of a house in flames men and women fell backwards at each discharge.|| But the resistance increasing with the danger, the wounded were carried off, and those who had thus carried off their expiring brethren from the melee, returned in haste to combat and die. Struck with a ball in the belly, one of these intrepid men, rolling on the pavement, exclaimed, "Come on; it is done;" he then sung the couplet of Figaro, *the strongest have made the law*, and yielded up his soul.¶ One cry resounded over the noise of the combat; Liberty. These savage words also resounded: "We must burn every thing, destroy every thing." But between the violent desire of completing their vengeance and the necessity of repulsing death, these rebels who have been painted until now as hired brigands, displayed on the contrary a rare disinterestedness. They threw money, watches, jewelry, into the flames, and exclaimed, "We do not wish to carry off any thing."** They were murdered on the ruins.

Workmen carried the dead bodies on litters through the faubourg, saying, "Behold the defenders of the country; citizens, give something to bury them."††

Such were those troubles whose physiognomy has been so strangely altered. It was not, as has been repeated, the venal exploit of a troop of fierce adventurers; no; it was a vengeance induced by false rumors, a deplorable and unbridled, but intrepid and sincere vengeance.

* Letters written from Paris at the beginning of the revolution, by J. H. Campe, (in German.)

† Exposé justificatif. ‡ L'Ami du Roi, etc., chap. 14. p. 93. § Ibid.

|| Toulangeon, Discours préliminaire, p. 35. ¶ L'Ami du Roi, etc. chap. 14. p. 93.

** We have here to invoke the testimony of Toulangeon, who saw the events, and whose affirmations cannot be suspected. See his Discours Préliminaire, p. 35.

†† L'Ami du Roi, etc., ubi supra.

Besenal, however, relates that when, after having stifled the émeute, he presented himself at court, he received an icy reception. And this circumstance, the name of a confidant of the Count d'Artois, mixed up with the origin of the movement, the delay in the repression, the interest which those who were disposed to calumniate the outbreak had in rendering the elections bloody, every thing indicates whence came the breath which kindled the sedition. But if it is true that they excited the popular feeling by deceiving it, it is not that they bought it; if money was scattered, it was only into the hands of four or five wretches; for men capable of selling their anger, would not have preserved their honor in the midst of blood, and in the presence of booty. Here also is a document which proves that these men were not, in accordance with a calumny which has become historical, *unknown brigands*.

"Between the king's attorney, demander and accuser, against Jean Thomas le Blanc, harness-maker; Nicholas Mary, writer; Jean Baptiste La Marche, house-painter; Joseph Tupin, copperplate printer; Etienne Farcel, gauze-maker; Pierre Quentin, sculptor, all defendants and accused. We say, by deliberation of the council, in provotal judgment and in the last resort, that the said . . . are declared attainted and convicted," etc.* . . . Harness-makers, copperplate printers, house-painters, gauze makers, sculptors, were the *unknown brigands* whom the proceeding reached and struck.

Thus the tragical question of the people announced itself from afar. They had spoken of wages, in the strongest of electoral agitations; and this word alone contained a revolution much more profound than that into which burgherism was precipitating itself. But no one yet had doubts, and the émeute was called the problem of the future suddenly raised.

* Extrait des Registres du Greffe de la prévôté et Marechaussée Générale de l'Ile de France, a la date du 18 Mai, 1789.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

Opening of the States General—Aspect of Versailles—The Assembly—The attitude of Necker—Tragical incidents—Marie Antoinette and Barnave—Struggle as to the verification in common; respective parts of the Commons, the Clergy and the Nobility—The Malonet Party—Robespierre, his distrust—Sièyes and Bailly in the Hall of the States—The country gentlemen at Court—Slow and steady progress of the Commons; their successive Victories—Sinister sight at Paris—The Commons constitute themselves into an Assembly—Mirabeau at the house of Necker—The Curates unite with the Commons—The Commons take the name of the National Assembly—Double and strange part of Mirabeau—Superstitious alarms of Marie Antoinette—Necker at Marly—The session of the Tennis Court; why Mounier proposed the Oath—The Nobility abandons Louis the Sixteenth, and turns to the Queen—The party of the Queen—The Clergy unite with the Commons—Plan of Necker rejected—Session of the 23d of June; the true character of that Session—Scene of drunken madness at Court—Émeute in Versailles—The Breton Club—The Nobility go to the Assembly—The definite triumph of Burgherism.

THE sun rose radiant over the city of Louis the Fourteenth, on the 4th of May, 1789. France was at Paris, Paris at Versailles. The States General being about to open on the next day, it had been determined, that this solemn event should be prepared for by a national and religious festival and common prayers. The day was superb, the sight displayed unequalled. But what made the grandeur of the show, was not the streets inundated by crowds and light, nor the glittering curtain of bayonets, nor the female heads crowding the windows, nor the rich draperies floating in the balconies, nor the grave voice of the priest, nor the sound of the bells rising towards heaven through the flourishes of trumpets, the rolling of drums, and the command of the captains. . . . No; the true, the imposing novelty was the language which was spoken through the city; it was the sense of the words exchanged on meeting; it was the alteration in faces, the boldness of look; the unusual pride of attitudes, the fever of souls; it was the manly and powerful restlessness of a people whom liberty visited.

There were besides a thousand different sentiments at the bottom of the universal emotion; hopes, regrets, melancholy returns, just wrath, ambition, terror, heroic and burning aspirations. Some saluted with their shouts the image of a sacred country. A festival to-day, said others, and a battle to-morrow.

At the appointed hour, the deputies of the three orders left the parish church of Notre Dame, to go in procession to the church of Saint Louis and the multitude crowded around the passage of the cortège. At that moment two women, Madame de Staël and Madame de Montmorin were looking at it from a window. As the daughter of Necker gave utterance to her joy, Madame de Montmorin said to her, "You are wrong to rejoice, great disasters will happen from this to France and us."* Madame

* Madame de Staël, *Considerations sur la révolution française*, chap. 16, p. 187.

de Staël could not avoid starting, and she afterwards recalled this circumstance when Madame de Montmorin died on the scaffold. The procession passed on. The minor orders and the clergy of Versailles led the van, having the music of the king's chapel in their midst. The deputies of the commons followed.* They were clothed in plain black mantles, but in the firmness of their step, and in their calm and strong countenances, it might be clearly seen that they carried the fortune of burgherism.

Among them was remarked the deputy Gérard, an energetic and fresh face, an hale countenance, with the heart of a freeman beneath the vest of a Breton peasant;† he appeared to be there to represent more particularly the people. Then came the deputies of the nobility, glittering with their embroidery, their white plumes and their jewels; then, injuriously separated from the bishops in their lawn sleeves and purple camails, came the plebeians of the church, the curates. The king and queen accompanied the holy sacrament, which shone in the hands of the Archbishop of Paris, beneath a magnificent dais, whose silken cords were held by the Counts de Provence and d'Artois, the Dukes d'Angouleme and de Berri.‡

Long and encouraging shouts greeted the order of the commons, because it was the revolution; the Duke of Orleans, because he affected to keep at a distance from the nobility and mixed in the last ranks of the commons; the tribunes known or pointed out, because they were conquerors; the king, because he was conquered. No popular salute announced the queen, no cry of love followed her. She, moved, but attentive to hide her grief, endeavored to brave this mute insult by disdainful airs, when she was seen suddenly to grow pale and totter.§ The Princess de Lamballe was obliged to support her. Marie Antoinette had heard the cry of *Orleans forever*|| resound in her ears, and had seen the light of triumph in the eyes of the duchess.¶

Towards what heights or towards what abyss were these grave personages, however, drawn? What employment would they make of force, once conquered, and to what were they about to push this great adventure? Mirabeau himself was ignorant, he who was seen every where and who filled the festival, he who advanced breathing the storms of the air with full lungs, carrying insolently his unworthy reputation, commanding admiration, exciting surprise, causing fear. The men who like Mounier and Malouet were "passionately reasonable,"** did think of covering the soil with ruins. One alone in this cortege, enlightened as he was by his own conviction, then†† foresaw the final consequences. He was among the most obscure; he was of those whose

* "For the word third estate is here proscribed as a monument of ancient servitude." Manuscript letter of Robespierre of the 24th of May, 1789.

† Hist. de la revolution, par deux amis de la liberté, t. 1. chap. 8. p. 189.

‡ Nougaret, Hist de règne de Louis Seize, t. 6. p. 133 et 134.

§ Montgaillard, t. 2. chap. 4. Madame Campan, t. 2. chap. 13. p. 37.

|| Mémoires relatifs à la famille royale de France, pendant la revolution, (published from the journal, letters and conversations of the Princess de Lamballe,) t. 1. p. 341.

¶ Montgaillard, t. 2. chap. 4.

** Madame de Staël, Considerations sur la Révolution Française.

†† The first manuscript letters of Robespierre.

name the passers by demanded; and his rigid deportment removing him from all familiar discourse, he walked on retired in himself, and as if removed from the surrounding agitation by the silence of his thoughts.

Having reached Saint Louis, the three orders took their seats in the nave. The king and queen were seated beneath a dais of violet velvet sprinkled with golden lilies, and a choir of melodious voices having chanted the hymn *O salutaris hostia*, the Bishop of Nancy appeared in the pulpit. They had hoped for lively and animated words, they listened with impatient hearts to an harangue which was a very complaisant amplification of this idea,* "religion is the strength of states." One trait, however, produced a sensation. The orator, after a lively sketch of the violences of the fiscal regime and the misery of the country, having exclaimed, "it is in the name of a good king, a just and sensible monarch, that these wretched exactors exercise their barbarities," applause resounded from all sides,† notwithstanding the etiquette which prohibited applause in the presence of the king even at the theatre.‡ But the hour of vain usages and servile respect was already passed.

On the 5th of May, 1789, the doors of the banqueting hall, in the avenue of the chateau, were opened; a vast rectangular enclosure, adorned with two ranges of columns of the Ionic order, and able to hold more than two thousand spectators.§ The ceiling, pierced in an oval form, allowed the light to penetrate through a curtain of white sarsenet. At the bottom of the saloon, on a platform magnificently decorated, and beneath a canopy fringed with gold, were the throne, the sofa of the queen and the stools of the princesses. At the foot of the platform was a bench for the secretaries of state, and before them a table covered with violet colored velvet. The benches destined for the clergy had been ranged on the right; those for the nobility on the left; those of the commons were facing the throne. Louis the Sixteenth was pleased with these arrangements. He had himself presided over the disposition of the carpet of la Savonnerie, and of the hangings which were to temper the brightness of the day. For on the eve of such an event, the thought of this king was about decorations,|| or still more in studying and reciting his speech at the opening, and the intonations of his voice.¶

A vulgar insult addressed to the third order marked the first assembly of the revolution. Introduced by a door from the rear, which a shed sheltered,** the deputies of the commons were retained at the entrance for several hours; and whilst after having been made to wait a long time, the royalty, nobility and clergy passed in through the great door; they, confined and shut up in a narrow space, offered the sight of a merchants' exchange.††

Between nine and ten o'clock, the Marquis de Brézé and two masters of ceremonies commenced arranging the deputies according to the order

* Mirabeau, Journal des Etats Generaux, No. 4. This and the following number are extremely rare.

† Ibid.

‡ Toulangeon, t. 1. p. 40.

§ Correspondance de Grimm, May, 1789.

|| Toulangeon, t. 1. p. 37.

¶ Madame Campan, t. 2. chap. 12. p. 37.

** Rabaud Saint-Etienne, precis historique, p. 72. Montgaillard, t. 2. p. 6.

†† Mirabeau, Journal des Etats Generaux, No. 2.

of their bailiwicks. Two hours were lost in the formalities of the ceremonial.

Seats in the form of an amphitheatre had been reserved for respectable spectators and elegantly dressed females, a select public, whom a shouting and sovereign public soon replaced. Counsellors of state, governors, lieutenant generals of provinces, came in succession to range themselves in the midst of the parquet. By the side of ministers of robe and the sword was Monsieur Necker, the only one among them who was in a citizen's dress.* He was loudly applauded. The Duke of Orleans was twice, when he entered among the deputies of Cressy in Valois, and when he was seen to insist on a curate of his deputation taking precedence of him.† But murmurs rose at the sight of the Count de Mirabeau.‡ He traversed the hall with a contemptuous and lordly air and with his head thrown back, like a man who knew the power of his vices. When the king appeared, followed by the queen, the princes and the princesses, the whole assembly arose and cheered. Louis the Sixteenth was clothed in a great royal mantle, he wore a cap and plumes, whose edge glittered with diamonds, and whose button was the Pitt.§ He was at first moved by the reception he met; but when all had become silent and immovable, and when before him appeared the firm and severe countenances of the commons, he was troubled.|| Mirabeau was heard to say to his neighbors, when pointing out the king whom so much splendor surrounded, "there is the victim."¶ The queen, on her side, was pale and trembling.

Having raised his hat and recovered himself, "Gentlemen," said Louis the Sixteenth, "the day which my heart has long awaited, has finally arrived, and I see myself surrounded by the representatives of that nation which I glory in commanding. A long interval has passed since the States General were last held, and though the convocation of these assemblies appeared to have fallen into disuse, I have not hesitated to restore an usage from which the kingdom can draw new strength, and which may open a new source of happiness to the nation." To exact from a king that he should himself urge to those commotions by which royalties perish, is to ask too much from human nature; in expressing some fears as "to the general restlessness of minds, and the exaggerated desire for innovations," Louis the Sixteenth was in his part. His wrong here, was only that of his situation and his principle. He added, moreover, that they might hope from his feelings all that the most tender interest in the public happiness could inspire, all that was permitted to be expected from a sovereign, "the first friend of his people." It was remarked that during the speech of the king, the queen, who was dressed very simply on that day, stood in an attitude of emotion and respect.**

The king having ceased speaking, the deputies of the nobility and clergy covered themselves. The commons at once imitated them, and

* Correspondance de Grimm, May, 1789.

† Ibid.

‡ Madame de Stael, Considerations, &c., t. 1. p. 188. Correspondance de Grimm, May, 1789.

§ Ibid.

|| Madame de Stael, Considerations, etc., t. 1. p. 189.

¶ Mémoires de Weber, t. 1. chap. 4. p. 335. Weber was present at the sitting.

** Ibid. t. 1. chap. 3. p. 326.

we may thus judge how far we were from the time when the representatives of the third estate went on their knees before the prince.* Louis the Sixteenth uncovered himself to calm the agitation arising from this legitimate and menacing novelty.

The keeper of the seals, Barentin, then spoke, and in a speech, the first part of which was devoted to undignified flatteries, he recalled the circumstances which had led to the convocation of the States General. He was not heard on account of the weakness of his organs, and his language besides was not calculated to draw after it the approval of the assembly. He, however, used language, which history should collect, because it bore testimony to the influence which was universally exercised by the philosophy of the eighteenth century. "Vices and uselessness alone merit the contempt of men, and all useful professions are honorable, whether they fulfill the sacred functions of the ministry of the altar, or whether they vow themselves to the defence of the country in the perilous career of combats . . . or whether they submit the wealth and industry of the different people of the earth to their credit, and the speculations of an active, foreseeing, calculating genius, or whether in exercising that profession, at last put in its place in the opinion of true sages, they fertilize the fields by culture, that first of the arts on which the human species depends for its existence; are not all citizens, whatever their condition, the members of one and the same family! If the love of order and necessity assign ranks which it is indispensable to maintain in a monarchy, esteem and gratitude do not admit those distinctions, and do not separate those professions which nature unites by the indispensable wants of men."†

In the last States General, the orator of the nobility had dared to say, with the approval of the court, "There is as much difference between us and the third estate, as between master and servant."‡ Now the keeper of the seals, Barentin, appeared to place the laborer beside the gentleman, in public esteem and gratitude.

Necker then rose, and the assembly became attentive. He first exposed with gravity, but at much too great length, the situation of the finances; the details of the deficit, the total of which he carried up to fifty-six millions; the efforts already made, the measures to be taken, the resources to be placed in action, and the administrative forces to be fructified. In noble and expressive terms he reassured them as to the danger of a bankruptcy. He placed the equal assessment of the public charges at the head of the reforms which the States General were to accomplish, demanding "that they should abolish forever, even to their names, taxes which preserved the memory of a disunion it was so pressing to efface."§ But what, had the nation been solemnly convened only to give it figures to discuss? Necker did not pretend this. "It would be," he said, "to regard the States General in a very limited manner to see them only in connection with finance, credit and the interest of

* Madame de Staël, *Considerations*, &c., t. 1. chap. 16, p. 188.

† *Moniteur*, sitting of the 5th of May, 1789.

‡ Florimond Rapine, *assemblée des trois états en l'an, 1614*.

§ *Moniteur*, sitting of the 5th of May, 1789.

money ; they should belong to times present and times to come." And gradually rising to those heights in which the genius of France appeared to confound itself with the genius of humanity. "A day will perhaps come, gentlemen," he exclaimed, "when you will stretch your interests farther ; a day will perhaps come when associating deputies from the colonies in your deliberations, you will cast a look of compassion on that unfortunate people who have been tranquilly made a barbarous object of traffic ; upon men similar to ourselves in thought, and especially in the faculty of suffering ; upon those men, whom without pity for their mournful complaints, we accumulate and confine in the hold of a vessel, to carry them with flowing sails to present to the chains which await them."* Necker approached the then so important question as to whether they should vote by orders or heads in trembling, and appeared to be more occupied with warding it off than resolving it. Was it not proper to leave to the two first orders to decide, separately, on the abandonment of their pecuniary privileges ? Why take from them the honor of this voluntary and generous renunciation ? For finally, "Such acts of justice were not common, and history did not afford an example."† This sacrifice once accomplished, the umbrages of some dissipated, the complaints of others appeased or extinguished, they would be enabled doubtless to understand that certain objects should be submitted to a separate deliberation, whilst on the other hand, there were others for which deliberation in common was preferable.

Thus spake Necker.

They had expected the programme of a revolution, and Necker presented a memoir. They had hoped that he would frankly and energetically, in the name of the king and the people, have prescribed deliberation in common ; he came to propose that they should first refer it to the good will of the two first orders. The deputies of the commons were surprised and almost irritated. They reproached the minister for the dogmatism of his language, which was condemned by the timidity of his views ; for the indiscreet exaggeration of his caution ; for having left a question undecided which he should have cut off, and for not having laid the foundation of a new constitution. Mirabeau made his journal the echo of the most lively indignation. He denied the financial genius of the minister in these terms ; "Behold our resources hypothecated on *faith* and *hope* on condition that we shall have *charity*."‡ Raising the vulgar turn of his Sarcasms by invective, criminating the confidence of Necker in nobles and priests, he uttered this cry which Versailles and Paris repeated ; "There is no generosity in being just."§

What foundation was there for such reproaches ?

Necker would have been enabled without doubt to make a constitution, if placed in the isolation of all power, he alone had been responsible for the future. But the nation had mounted on the scene ; it was hereafter to provide for its own destiny. That was not then the wrong of Necker.

His true wrong was, in not having decided from the first, that the

* Moniteur, sitting of the 5th of May, 1789.

† Ibid.

‡ Mirabeau, Journal des Etats Généraux, No. 2.

§ Ibid.

three orders should verify their powers in common, and form at once the same assembly. What did he fear? Public opinion sustained him. Borne on, by the natural course of ideas and things, he would easily have triumphed over the resistance of the court, and thus prevented a schism between the three orders, which every one foresaw. But he failed in resolution, at the very moment it was the most necessary. His friends pressed him to decree the union, instead of imploring it; Messieurs de Saint-Priest and Nivernais, his colleagues, wished the verification to be made previously by the keeper of the seals;* he refused it to them, showing them the people. He was fearful of being stranded if he undertook it. It was his vanity which impeded his boldness; his personality was enveloped in moderation; and he was not a statesman, because he was too desirous of appearing to be one.

Certainly if the nobles and priests had not been blind about the point of transforming into rights the abuses they enjoyed, there would have been some skill and greatness in charging the privileged themselves with the destruction of privilege, to interest them morally in the success of their adversaries, finally, to create for them this alternative, either to honor their defeat or to weaken it. But on the part of the two first orders, the sacrifice of the abuses of the past could not be—as will be seen hereafter—but the effect of a passing intoxication, whilst awaiting the empire of justice.

Strange accidents of history! It had been determined at court, that four halls should be prepared, three for the three orders, and one for unions of state. "Let us be careful," the ministers had said, "that the commons do not establish themselves in the room consecrated to the opening session. Where the apparent centre of the national representation was, there its heart and life would soon be, in the eyes of the people. Do not let us permit the commons to fill the residence of the states, by becoming their image." The halls were designated, M. de Saint-Priest being charged with this care. But one of these halls was a riding house which the administration of the stables was unwilling to give up.† The combination failed. Thus the royalty was reduced to place the acquisition of a riding house among its chances for safety. And this royalty, which had so often abused the springs of absolute power, was now stopped before a refusal of the administration of the stables!

On the 6th of May, early in the morning, the following placard was read in Versailles: "BY ORDER OF THE KING—His majesty having informed the deputies of the three orders of his intention that they should meet this day, the 6th of May, they are informed that the *place* destined to receive them will be ready at nine o'clock in the morning."

Would the order be executed? Would the privileged consent to unite with the commons, to proceed with them to the preliminary operation, that of the verification of powers? An immense question, and which was judged to be the decisive one; for the verification of powers would lead invincibly, if it took place in common, to the vote by heads; and

* Lettres et instructions de Louis Seize au Comte de Saint-Priest, p. 95. of the Notice sur le Comte de Saint-Priest, by M. de Barante, Paris, 1845.

† Ibid. p. 94.

the vote by heads was, thanks to the doubling of the third estate, the certain triumph of the revolution.

The members of the commons go to the appointed place. They wait. The clergy and nobility do not appear. A strong agitation is then manifested in this meeting of men assembled from different places, still unknown to each other, all free, all equal, all menaced. Voices are commingled, propositions increase.* The most ardent declare, that without paying any attention to a sacrilegious schism, they should constitute themselves a *National Assembly*. Some demand that conciliatory measures be adopted. But to constitute themselves into a national assembly, was to precipitate every thing. To appoint a deputation, was imprudently to recognize a distinction of orders. Grave voices are now raised; they recommend patience, the virtue of the strong; and the phrase that Necker had pronounced the preceding evening, resounds: *let us not be envious of time*. The effervescence gradually subsides, the tumult becomes appeased. It was decided that the verification of powers not having been made, the commons will consider themselves "as a mere aggregation of individuals presented by the States General," and they push respect for the principle so far as to refuse to open the letters sent into the hall, addressed to the third estate.† About two hours and a half after this, fresh news is received, the orders of the clergy and nobility had determined upon a separate verification of powers; the former by a majority of one hundred and thirty-three against one hundred and fourteen, the latter by a majority of one hundred and eighty-eight to forty-seven.‡ The struggle had commenced. What was to be the issue? The assembly of the commons, well determined not to flinch, adjourned to the next day, which saw it at its post, unshaken in its determination, and full of calmness, power and majesty.

They were divided at the chateau between anxiety and anger. On the evening of the procession of the States General, having returned with despair on her countenance, and her grief too long restrained, the queen had fallen into such fits that her bracelets broke.§ For several hours she was a prey to frightful convulsions, and the ladies in attendance were obliged to cut open her dress to assist her in breathing. On that same night, a young deputy of the third estate, Barnave, whom the grace of the queen had touched, went to offer his services to her through the Princess de Lamballe, promising a devoted support, if they would yield to a constitutional monarchy. Marie Antoinette interrupted the princess, and flew into a rage.|| She thought she saw constantly those dark countenances which a festival had shown her; and she still remembered that cry of *Orleans for ever*, the insult of which had been reserved for ever. Should she permit the danger to increase, should she allow the threat to be realized? She held ardent cabals at the house of Madame de Polignac, whither the

* Seconde lettre du Comte de Mirabeau à ses commettants, postscript.

† Histoire de la Revolution par deux amis de la liberté. Première lettre du Comte de Mirabeau à ses commettants.

‡ Extracted from the registers of the deliberations of the deputies composing the nobility to the States General.

§ Mémoires relatifs à la famille Royale de France, pendant la révolution, t. 1. p. 341.

|| Ibid. p. 343.

leaders of the nobility and the clergy came to encourage her in resistance. The moral knot which the journals tied between Versailles and Paris, was a first obstacle to remove; they did not hesitate; a decree of the council suppressed the sheet of the *States General*, only one number of which had appeared, and prohibited the publication of more. Tardy violence. Mirabeau redoubles his audacity; he continued the work begun under the title of *letters to my constituents*; the Hotel de Ville of Paris protested;* public opinion defended its kingdom; the court recoiled in alarm. There were besides many other monitors than the public prints. Every word which left the hall of the states was prolonged by the echoes of the Palais Royal, the clubs and the faubourgs; and the roads from Versailles to Paris were covered with voluntary newsmen who went backwards and forwards unceasingly, the panting conductors of the revolutionary electricity.

The attitude taken by the members of the commons interdicted them from steps calculated to show the division of orders. They carefully abstained from every thing that could give their meeting the character of an organized *chamber*. They authorized, however, twelve of their number to go to the nobles and priests, but in the capacity of benevolent mediators only, and not as deputies.†

Uncertain as was the sense of this opening, the clergy received it joyfully. The princes of the church, alarmed by the secret sympathies which were inclining so many honest curates towards the popular cause, were trembling at the risk of a combat without an army. Thus the part of mediators was suitable at once to their sacerdotal functions and their skill. They did not, then, confine themselves to appointing conciliatory commissioners, they pressed the nobility to do the same, and through their urgency a deputation of gentlemen presented themselves to the commons on the 13th of May.‡ But what was the astonishment of the assembly, what its indignation, when, after having said, "Messieurs, we have the honor to bring you the resolutions determined upon by the order of the nobility; you will see in them only a desire to bring about a fraternal union,"§ the Duke de Praslin read in a loud and commanding voice, a series of resolutions setting forth that the nobility had thought proper to verify its powers separately; that it had organized in its own chamber; and that, if it had consented to choose conciliatory commissioners, it was on the invitation of the clergy, and out of pure deference. They cried out on all sides that such a communication was offensive! What! The nobility appeared to bestow a favour on the other orders when it condescended to act in concert with them; and it spoke in derision of *fraternal union* when it enumerated acts which tended to render that union impossible. Mirabeau vented himself in bitter raileries. If the nobles had then the right to verify their powers separately, to organize apart, what was there to prevent their proceeding to make a constitution, regulate the finances, promulgate the laws? Twenty-four millions of men

* *Mémoires de Bailly*, t. 1. p. 39.

† *Séances des députés des communes*, p. 11, at the end of the *Procès-verbal des conférences pour la vérification des pouvoirs*.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 21.

§ *Ibid.*

were of some account when counted. The nobles were not France;* and here Mirabeau but expressed the feeling which had escaped from the assembly of the commons on the reading of the resolutions of the nobility. The assembly restrained itself however, and its dean replied in a grave tone to the deputation of the nobles,† “We have not organized. We will take into consideration the mode of reconciliation that has been proposed to us.”

Every revolution has at its outset men who serve it whilst still weak and moderate, but who seek to stop it as soon as it becomes strong; as soon as it increases and threatens to become sublime. Such men were Mounier and Malouet. The first already questioned himself anxiously about the consequences. The second endeavored from that time to chill the movement. Alarmed at the indomitable calmness of the commons, frightened by the lofty aims of the nobility, Malouet was not afraid to invite strength to take the supplicating attitude of weakness. He drew up a plan of a declaration in which it was said, “. . . We wish and desire ardently to unite with our co-deputies of the clergy and nobility. . . . We hope from their patriotism, and all the obligations which they have in common with ourselves, that they will not much longer defer putting the national assembly into activity. . . . We are the more impatient for it . . . , as we are afflicted at not having been yet enabled through a deputation from the States General, to render to the king the respectful thanks, the vows and homage of the nation. We declare, formally, that it is our intention to respect, and that we have no right to attack, the property and honorary prerogatives of the clergy and nobility. . . .”‡ What reception would the commons give to a plan in which the level of the sentiments and language was so lowered? Malouet had his doubts; for before risking his motion, he consulted with a person who did not then make a part of the national representation, but who had a hand in the events, and whom a savage melancholy, a concentrated energy, a sententious and sober speech led to the part of profundity. This was the famous Abbé Siéyes. He applauded the respect of Malouet for the property of the two first orders, but he counselled him to silence on the subject of their *honorary prerogatives*. “Would you then design,” said Malouet, in surprise, “to destroy the nobility?”—“Yes, certainly.”—“And your means?”—“We will find them. We must at least set the stakes, and what we cannot do our successors will.”§ Thus, to destroy the nobility, would have been the business of the succeeding generation; and this was what then thought and said Siéyes, the man of sure combinations, the boasted calculator.

Malouet presented his motion to the commons, who rejected it.

They must however determine upon a part. The clergy and nobility had chosen conciliatory commissioners, and it was requisite to know if the commons, in their turn, would do the same. This was what Rabaut Saint-Etienne, a protestant minister of Nîmes, proposed to do on the 14th of May, provided, however, “that they should not depart from the princi-

* Troisième Lettre du Comte de Mirabeau à ses Commettants.

† Séances des Deputés des Communes, p. 24.

‡ See the whole plan in the Fourth Letter of the Count of Mirabeau to his constituents.

§ Beaulieu, *Essais Historiques*, t. 1. p. 139.

ples of the vote by heads, and of the *indivisibility of the States General*.* But so much reserve appeared to be a humiliation, or a danger to Le Chapelier, the deputy from Rennes. They could only, in his opinion, make the following declaration, energetically and peremptorily: "The deputies of the commons will obey as lawful representatives those whose powers shall have been examined by commissioners appointed in general assembly Each deputy being able to receive but from it alone the sanction which constitutes him a member of the States General."† This was to cut short tergiversations, and if the appeal to unity was not listened to, to throw down the gage of combat. The assembly became agitated and divided. A small number range around Le Chapelier; the majority are with Rabaut Saint-Etienne. A deputy from Anas, Maximilien Robespierre, then rises, and despairing of seeing the vigorous motion of his colleague of Rennes adopted, he adjures the assembly to abstain, at least towards the nobles, from a step by which their pride would triumph, and only to address itself to the order in which, by the side of proud prelates, were modest and popular confessors of the gospel.‡ Robespierre had drawn up his plan; he asks for deliberation upon it. But his influence was then so limited, his voice had so little sway, that they disdained to take it into consideration.§ It was stifled when Mirabeau seized on it and made it the text of a burning discourse, which these words summed up: "Send to the clergy, sirs, and do not send to the nobility; for the nobility orders and the clergy negotiates."||

On the 18th of May, after a debate of four days, the opinion of Rabaut Saint-Etienne prevailed.¶ A commission, of which he himself was one, was immediately appointed; Barnave was found in it; Mirabeau sought for in it.

The conferences then commenced, and the deputies of the nobility chose that moment to announce that they renounced their privileges. But it was a calculation rather than a sudden motion on their part. Well determined to yield nothing on the decisive question of the vote in common, they wished to cover with the eclat of a patriotic sacrifice, that which their obstinate isolation had rendered dangerous. It is just to add, that this sacrifice was commanded to many among them by their own cahiers,** and responded to the generous sentiments of the minority. The conferences were of short duration; they could not agree; and on the 26th of May, on the motion of the Duke de Villequier,†† the chamber of nobles broke off the negotiations shortly. The struggle became embittered.

The commons, on their side, felt the deep shock of contrary passions. Robespierre, then an obscure observer of men and things, already divined the turncoats, and silently marked them in the depths of his soul. In the letters which he wrote to the most intimate confidants of his thoughts, he already pointed out the designs of Malouet, a dangerous artisan of the

* Séances des Députées des Communes.

† Ibid. p. 28.

‡ Manuscript Letter of Robespierre of the 24th of May, 1789. § Ibid.

|| See this Speech in the Fourth Letter of the Count de Mirabeau to his constituents.

¶ Séances des Députés des Communes, p. 33.

** Beaulieu, *Essais Historiques*, t. 1. p. 127.

†† Ibid. p. 52.

exclusive triumph of burgherism, and rejoiced in the decline of reputations which did not add strength to the people; those of Target and Mounier for example. He feared Mirabeau a little, knowing him to be a character capable of those swoons in which genius loses all its authority, if not all its splendor. There were divisions, certainly; treasons, perhaps. But Robespierre reassured himself on perceiving around him more than a hundred citizens disposed to die for their country.*

The dissensions among the commons were moreover very vague, and did not prevent them from increasing in confidence and boldness against the nobility. Every thing besides served them. The love of concord gave them in the chamber of the clergy, such priests as the curates, Ballard, Jallet, Dillon, Gregoire. The feeling of justice united with a taste for popularity procured them supporters in the chamber of the nobles, a minority in which figured the Duke of Orleans, Alexandre and Charles de Lameth, Lafayette, the Marquis de Castellane, the Count de Crillon, the Count de Montmorency. Among the females of the court, several and some of them the most fascinating and influential, made a trial of patriotism as the occupation of their leisure hours; Mesdames de Stael, de Coigny, de Castellane, d'Arguillon, de Luynes were quoted,† as being present at the sessions of the commons, giving political dinners, talking of the constitution, inspiring pamphlets, and inflaming the plebeian ardor. Paris finally finished choosing its representatives; a succor impatiently waited for. On the 25th of May, the twenty new deputies whom the capital sent, entered the hall of the states. Among them were the abbé Sièyes and Bailly.‡ The first arrived, sombre, taciturn and resolved. The second was seized, on entering the hall, with a mingled emotion of embarrassment and respect. Wearing a black dress, cloak, long hair and cravat, a costume of etiquette which many were already beginning to abandon, Bailly advanced with a timid air, regretting a little his importance of the Hotel de Ville, and like, as he himself candidly confesses,§ to a minor, who passes from the paternal mansion, in which he was the object of a thousand cares, to go suddenly into the great world where no one cares for him. But he had virtues which were soon to be saluted in his person; moderation, firmness. They were the virtues of the present hour.

The commons could not then flinch. But the nobility opposed the violence of irritated pride to their patient and unshakable will. It followed with high zeal the road to the abyss which d'Epréménil, Lacqueille, Bouthillier and a young captain of cavalry, ennobled within twenty-five years,|| the impetuous Cazalès marked out for it. The most bitter were the country gentlemen, because the rust of their native prejudices had not been rubbed in the contact of great cities, and because the court held in reserve a crowd of boasted nothings to reduce their inexperience; a familiar smile from the Count d'Artois, a semblance of confidence, the honor of appearing at the bedside of the monarch, or of being admitted

* Manuscript Letter of Robespierre, of the 24th of May, 1789.

† Mémoires de Ferrières, t. 1. p. 40.

‡ Mémoires de Bailly, t. 1. p. 71.

|| Madame de Stael, Considerations, etc., t. 1. chap. 17. p. 199.

§ Ibid. p. 72.

to play with the queen.* "You have the glory of saving the monarchy," they said to them; and they intoxicated them with imprudence. The clergy alone, consequently, afforded an opening for a final effort of conciliation. The dignitaries of the church endeavored in vain to make God descend into the quarrel. Many of the curates reminded them, that their Christ was the Son of a carpenter, they were the children of the people.

The commons then determined, before having recourse to power, to address a fraternal, final invitation to the clergy; and it was truly a superb sight when on the 27th of May, Target, followed by some of his colleagues, went to say to the assembled priests, "We adjure you in the name of a God of peace to unite with us." The Lord was not now invoked to the aid of a miserable vanity of cast; they took to witness the Being, in whom the unity of the human family resides. The humble curates of the village churches were softened; tears flowed, a cry was heard, "let us go at once." But the prelates of the court objected the necessity of acting gravely, of reflecting, and under the inspiration of their recommendatory wisdom, the order replied, "the proposition of the commons deserves a serious examination; the clergy will take it into consideration."† The commons waited until night: they waited uselessly.

The most criminal of intrigues was then woven. To prevent the alliance between the commons and the curates, the leaders of the anti-revolutionary party surround Louis the Sixteenth; they encourage him to interfere; they counsel him to order a resumption of the conferences between the commissioners of the three orders, but in the presence of the keeper of the seals, and of commissioners appointed by the government. It was to recommence an experience, which had only served to embitter souls; it was to revive the discord under the color of reconciliation.‡ Louis the Sixteenth yielded, either through complicity or weakness, and a letter in which he expressed his desire was sent to the three orders.

The obedience of the clergy was prompt and unreserved. But the agitators of the nobility studiously endeavored to render the conferences which were about to be resumed necessarily sterile.§ Was not the respective veto of the three orders upon each other the palladium of liberty, a guarantee of peace, a safeguard for the throne? This was what d'Entraigues, Bouthillier, Cazalès developed with impassioned urgency, and they pressed the nobles to take an energetic and decisive part. The majority followed them, and declared "that the deliberation by orders and the faculty of prevention, which pertained dividedly to each of them, were the constitutives of the monarchy."¶ But several gentlemen immediately protested. The Count de Montmorency, the Chevalier de Mantelle, the Baron de Haranbure, the Duke de Luynes, the Marquis de Lancosme, opposed a revolution which was contrary, they said, to the conciliatory sentiments manifested in the letter of the king. Messieurs Cypicere and Sinety fell back on their instructions, which prescribed the

* *Mémoires de Ferrières*, t. 1. p. 35.

† *Séances des Députés des Communes*, p. 56.

‡ A royalist writer, Beaulieu, himself admits it, *Essais Historiques*, t. 1. p. 155.

§ Beaulieu, *Essais historiques*, t. 1. p. 158.

¶ *Séances des Députés des Communes*, p. 62.

vote by head. The Marquis de Castellane declared that all his wishes were for union. The Count de Crillon said that he thought he had been deputed to the States General, for the purpose of giving a constitution to France, which was an impossibility if they admitted the veto of one order on the others. The Duke of Orleans, the Count de Croix, the Count Charles de Lameth were astonished at a resolution which condemned the conciliatory commissioners to have nothing to conciliate.* Vain protests! The majority kept on.

The resolution of the nobility rendered these new conferences evidently illusory beforehand. The commons, however, consented to resume them *from deference to the wishes of his majesty*.† They chose Bailly president by the title of Dean, and determined that a solemn deputation should go to present to the king "the respectful homages of his faithful commons, the assurances of their zeal and love for his sacred person and the royal family, and the feelings of lively gratitude with which they were penetrated for the tender solicitude of his majesty for the wants of his people."‡ Thus did the commons express themselves on the 29th of May, 1789, three years and eight months before the tragedy of the 21st of January.

Whilst they were enveloping their thought in the formularies of ancient servilism, the court was dreaming only of humbling them. When Bailly went to demand from the keeper of the seals, Barentin, that the deputies of the commons should be admitted to his majesty, the minister was not afraid to avow, that there was a grave difficulty about it. Could they suffer the orator of the third estate to speak to the king without going down on his knees? At least it was necessary that a more submissive attitude should serve to mark the inferiority of the third order to the other two. "Not," added the keeper of the seals, "that we wish to insist on an old usage which wounds third estate, and which the king has no intention of exacting. If the king, however, wished it? . . . And if twenty-five millions of men do not wish it?" coldly interrupted Bailly.§ This was at the second demand of an audience by Bailly, and on the eve of the day on which this scene occurred, Louis the Sixteenth had lost his oldest son. From this arose a thousand odious, false rumors, which it pleased the hatred of the courtiers to spread. They related that Bailly had wished to force the door of the king's room; that he had troubled the most inviolable of griefs by a cruel obstinacy, and that Louis the Sixteenth had been compelled to exclaim, "Are there, then, no fathers in this chamber of the third estate?"|| The dauphin whom death had carried off, was a frail, decrepid child, and sad before the time. The golden days of the Trianon had fled never to return. Stricken as a mother, menaced as a queen, Marie Antoinette fell into a profound melancholy, and then it was that her hair turned white.¶

The situation was prolonging itself; it did not appear to develope itself.

* Beaulieu, t. 1. p. 161.

† Mémoires de Bailly, t. 1. p. 85.

‡ Séances des Députés des Communes, p. 69. § Mémoires de Bailly, t. 1. p. 104.

|| Compare the Mémoires de Bailly, t. 1. p. 102 et 103 et les Mémoires de Weber, t. 1. p. 342 et 343.

¶ Mémoires de Weber, t. 1. p. 341.

The resumption of the conferences had produced the foreseen result. Vain debates, redoubled bitterness, an irritation which bred war. Necker proposed to the three orders to verify their powers separately, to give each other a reciprocal communication of the result, and in case of disagreement to recur to the king. But in this pretended plan of conciliation, the one saw but an attack on their boldness, the others a snare. Still whilst agreeing to it, the nobility declared that they referred to their preceding resolutions; and the commons took the text of this imprudent restriction to refuse it, whilst casting the blame of the refusal on the nobles.*

It was time to conquer. Paris was grumbling. Contemplated from a little distance, the slow and grave march of the commons resembled immobility too much. The people, besides, were suffering; bread was dear, and if burgherism had only liberty to demand from the States General, the people had to demand the right to live from them. When, on the 19th of May, the orange-sellers and other women of the market, went to the Hotel de Ville to congratulate the electors, they had not failed to say, "Think of the people, sirs." And what had the electors replied? That it was with the popular interests the States General were occupied, and that the women of the market had defenders, friends, brethren, in the assembly of the third estate.† And yet the poor continued to lament; bread continued to be dear. There was no doubt that the conduct of the commons was wisely calculated, as firm as wise, such, finally, as circumstances required; before consulting about improving the victory, it was necessary to conquer. But passion does not count obstacles, and hunger does not wait. A decree had also been pronounced, about which burgherism did not disturb itself, and which made a sinister impression on the people. The men arrested in the recent émeute which the question of wages had excited, were condemned by the deliberation of the council, the prevotal judgment, and in last resort to a punishment which spoke actively to the imagination of the multitude. Placed under the custody of the executioner, they were led through the city with naked feet, in their shirts, a halter around their necks, and carrying an opprobrious handbill on their breasts, to the principal door of the cathedral of Paris. There they were to confess on their knees, with a burning torch of yellow wax in their hands, the crime of misery changed into fury.‡

The leaders of the order of the clergy determined to derive advantage from these sombre circumstances. They announced loudly that they were about to take the dearness of grain into consideration, and invited the third estate in their turn to bestow their care upon the public misfortunes. The commons understood the insidious bearing of this step. They replied, that it was a duty to take the amelioration of the sufferings of the people into consideration, but that they wished it done in the *common hall*.

* Rabaud Saint Etienne, *Precis Historique*, p. 77.

† *Mémoires de Bailly*, t. 1. p. 65.

‡ Extrait des Registres du Greffe de la prévôté et Marchaussée générale de l'île de France, dated 18th of May, 1789.

There was still a like exchange of artifices, and the limit between prudence and dignity was surpassed. Sièyes struck the great blow. On the 10th of June, the assembly, informed in advance, met in solemn expectation. Sièyes rises in the midst of a profound silence, and proposes to address a final *summons* to the two other orders, informing them that *the calling of the bailiwicks would take place in an hour, and that it would be given by default against those who did not appear*. The proposition, after having been smoothed* down a little, was put to vote and adopted. It was the Revolution.

On the night of this fruitful day, Mirabeau ascended the staircase of Necker mysteriously,† with his head lost in strange thoughts. Should he whom the familiar demon of Caius Gracchus agitated prevent the river from overflowing? Should he whom the regime of courts permitted to live, lost in vice, allow the royalty to perish? If he had need of the public peace for his genius, he had also need of the monarchy for the corruption of his heart. Thus combatted, full of violence, full of fear, and finally succumbing to the contradictions of his powerful and miserable nature, he had lessened himself even to solicit a secret interview with that Genevese minister, against whom he exhausted all the imprecations of hatred, all the forms of contempt, on the preceding evening. Necker received with insulting coldness‡ him who was called at court the *Plebeian Count*. "Let us see," he said to him, in an imperious, sharp voice, "what your propositions are." With Mirabeau astonishment was only anger; he fell into a fury and started off, promising to drag Necker into the tribune, and crush him there.

On the 13th of June, the assembly was engaged in the verification of its powers, when on calling the seneschal's jurisdiction of Poitou, three curates present themselves; Lecesve, Ballard, Jallet.§ There was a true and touching delirium. They surround them, thank them in the name of the people, clasp their hands and embrace them. "But they are still deliberating," exclaims a voice, in the chamber of the clergy—"I do not place my conscience in deliberation,"|| said the curate Ballard. On the next and succeeding days, the commons receive, in the midst of the most lively transports, other priests whom the revolution and its fortune led. The abbé Gregoire appeared. The abbé Morelles said, on entering, "I am here, sirs; but since the opening of the States General, my heart was among you."¶ Unanimous applause greeted this avowal of a holy desertion. Some applauded, weeping.

It is done, every thing is precipitated. In a preceding session,** Malouet had appeared to fear the presence of the multitude, and had drawn on himself these thundering words from Volney: "There are no strangers here, these are but brethren." On the 15th of June, the hall of the

* Les Séances des Députés des Communes, p. 144 et suiv.

† Beaulieu, t. 1. p. 140 et 141; recital of Malouet, extracted from the 3d volume of the Collection of his opinions.

‡ According to the statement of Malouet, to whom Mirabeau addressed himself to obtain an audience.

§ Mémoires de Bailly, t. 1. p. 141.

|| Hist. de la Revolution par deux amis de la liberté, t. 1. chap. 10.

¶ Moniteur, session of the 15th of June.

** In that of the 28th of May.

assembly was filled with spectators; the days of the forum had risen; and it was beneath the looks, under the guardianship and amidst the applauses of an immense people, that the commons proceeded to the definite organization of the assembly. But what name to give it? Sièyes proposed the *assembly of the known and verified representatives of the nation*. Mirabeau spoke; he said he was tormented by fever, and fever, in fact, shone in his eyes. The trembling of his body, his sunken cheeks, his lips more contracted than usual, betrayed the ravages of a long emotion in him; and before he had opened his mouth, it appeared as if they had heard the breath of the hostile passions which were swelling his breast. He was provoking, astonishing by contradictions, vehement, insolent, sublime. He objected to the motion of Sièyes, declaring it to be too bold, finding it almost factious, and he demanded that they should adopt these words, the *representatives of the people*. Never did human language translate in so striking a manner, and with so much splendor, the struggles of a troubled soul. This orator of kings, this orator of the multitude, was seen to insult and glorify the people by turns. He began with insult. If he wished them to be called the *people*, it was because it behoved them to be so, and not deny the clergy, not deny the nobility, not to hurl themselves imprudently against the royal *veto*, the sacred and necessary *veto*. Then replying to those who placed their audacity on aid, promised or offered by auxiliaries of the lower order, he showed the people ignorant of their rights, ignorant of liberty, using its strength in suffering, and *ready to sell the constitution for bread*.* This language, so outrageous and so unjust, unveiled the aim of Mirabeau. To substitute a variable, fallacious title for that of *commons*, to arrest the absorption of the nobility and clergy by the majority of French society, to half maintain the distinction of orders, was what he wanted to come at with these words, *representatives of the people*. "Let us count heads," nobly exclaimed Target, "not fortunes."† Thouret showed the danger of a denomination, which, interpreted in its most restricted sense, appeared to consecrate the iniquitous distinctions that they were employed in destroying.‡ Thus irritated out of himself, ashamed of his part as a courtier, and brought back by his anger to the true part of his genius, Mirabeau resumed at the risk of an heroic inconsistency; "Yes, if this name of *people* were not ours, we should choose it out of all, to regard it as the most precious occasion that exists of serving that people, who are every thing; that people whom we represent, whose rights we defend, from whom we have received ours, and of whom they appear to blush that we borrow the titles. Ah! my soul becomes elevated. . . . The friends of liberty will be called *remonstrants* in America, *herdsmen* in Switzerland, *beggars* in the Low Countries. They will rid themselves of the insults of their enemies."§ The contemner of the multitude had disappeared, it was the tribune who spoke. But he had passed at a single bound from the chateau to the public square, without stopping at the intermediate place in which burgerism wished to pitch its camp. The majority were

* *Moniteur*, session of Monday morning, the 15th of June, 1789.

† *Ibid.*,

"evening,

‡ *Ibid.*

§ *Ibid.*, close of the evening session of the 16th of June.

alarmed; and perceiving in the distance the phantom of that new, unexpected power towards which Mirabeau was stretching his hand, murmured.*

The denomination which was evidently best suited to such an assembly, was that, which undetermined, elastic, could be contracted so as to mean only the commons, or be expanded so as to signify the nation,† that which had been brought forward several times already, that which the deputy Legrand proposed, the *National Assembly*.‡ In vain, sustained by Rabaut Saint-Etienne and Barnave, did Mounier endeavor to induce the commons to constitute themselves into *the lawful assembly of the representatives of the majority of the nation, acting in the absence of the minority*; they rejected with one voice this immeasurably long title, and which preserved the trace of the opposition of orders. They must vote however: great and terrible proof! For they learned that an unusual noise of arms and horses was making at Versailles; that an order had been sent to put the German troops in motion; that many of the nobles rendered furious by the excess of the danger, spoke of referring it to the fortune of the sword. Had there not been a question of arresting the Duke of Orleans,§ condemning him, and enveloping in his ruin his accomplices in revolution, in order to cast dread into men's minds? The call of the names begins, and a thousand confused clamors rise at once. Some exclaim against this precipitate step. Others, and at their head the Bretons, an indomitable race, wish it decided at once; that no time should be left to the enemies of the nation, to recognize each other; and that if the court dared to strike, it would have to strike, not an undecided and wavering assembly of men, but an assembly seated in its rights, nobly and for ever compromised, representing the people, being the law. The tumult became formidable. All the members were on their feet. Here was the group of temporizers forming a minority, there that of the impatient, with a long table,|| to separate them. Thus placed face to face, they exchanged bitter language, menacing gestures. It was no longer the calm and regulated energy of preceding days. Mirabeau and Barrère opened stormy perspectives, the first in making them think of the people, the second, in allowing these profound words to escape concerning the States General; "You are called to recommence history."¶ The Mouniers and Malouets, those who did not intend to push matters beyond the triumph of burgherism, were then moved in an inverse sense. Before them were the nobility, the clergy and the chateau; behind them murmuring Paris and its faubourgs. Then resounded the accusation incurred by whomsoever stops in the midst of a society which is progressing. The word treason was pronounced.** An unknown person sprang from the tribune, and hastened to lay hands upon Malouet.†† The moderate party

* *Moniteur*, close of the evening session of the 16th of June.

† This was, in the opinion of Bailly, the great merit of the title of National Assembly. Bailly who then presided over the commons, strongly reflected its feelings and mind.

‡ *Le Point du jour*, Journal of Barrère, No. 1.

§ Beaulieu, *Essais Historiques*, t. 1. p. 206 et 207.

|| *Mémoires de Bailly*, t. 1. p. 153.

¶ *Le point du jour*, Journal de Barrère, No. 1.

** *Mémoires de Bailly*, t. 1. p. 152.

†† *Droz*, t. 2. liv. 8, p. 218.

redoubled their violence and their clamor. Lassitude finally succeeded so much excitement; but many of the members had already retired; it was night; the decision was obliged to be put off to the next day.

On the next day the 17th of June, the assembly, by a majority of four hundred and ninety-one votes against ninety, took the name of *national assembly*; and, on the 19th of June, restored to more serene thoughts, it laid the foundations of its sovereign power with as much force as wisdom. To husband an arm against the court, it declared the taxes until then collected illegal, deciding however that they should be levied, as soon as the assembly was united, but should cease to be so, if it was dissolved. To reassure the creditors of the state, "it placed them under the guardianship of the honor of the French nation." To conciliate the people, it promised to devote its first moments to an examination of the causes of the famine.*

There was frantic joy among the people at this news and a strong emotion everywhere. In the chamber of the nobility where d'Epréménil loudly demanded the dissolution, the Duke of Orleans proposed an union; but the gravity of the circumstances overweighing him, he became alarmed and fainted.† The sensation was as lively and less sterile in the chamber of the clergy; the curates carried the deliberation in common enthusiastically; and the popular gratitude which awaited their passage, lavished its most burning favors on them.‡

The chateau was, during this time, a prey to vertigo. Taking anger for vigor, and deceiving themselves with courage, the leaders of the Polignac club opposed only a frivolous excitement to the constancy of the assembly and its consecutive hardships. The queen had lost the confidence which happiness inspires, she had not yet the force which extreme danger almost always gives to women, and she passed dolorously through the alternatives of weakness, now impetuous and intractable, now so superstitious and trembling, that she was alarmed by a candle going out, as a frightful presage.§ On his side, the youngest of the brothers of the kings threatened and essayed already to try the violence which rendered the old age of Charles the Tenth so fatal to his family.

Thus pressed, what was the government to do? Necker was of opinion, that they should act promptly and with eclat. His great ambition would have been, without however breaking with the two first orders, to place the king at the head of the popular party.|| Should they leave to the commons alone the charge and the honor of reconquered liberty? In their popularity, there was, Necker thought, a part which should compose the lot of the monarch,¶ and which they should claim in his name. He counselled consequently to order the union of the three orders, but in a solemn manner, from the height of the monarchy, in terms which should be of a nature to raise the price of the royal interference, and to save the nobility the humiliation of bending before the third estate.

This was not certainly the policy of a tribune. This desire to mono-

* Le point du jour, No. 1.—Mémoires de Bailly, t. 1. p. 108 et suiv.

† Mémoires de Ferrières, t. 1. p. 53.

‡ Ibid. p. 54.

§ Mémoires de Madame Campan, t. 2. p. 38.

|| Mounier, De l'influence attribuée aux philosophes de la Révolution Française, p. 88.

¶ Necker, de la Révolution Française, t. 1. première partie, sect. 4. p. 188.

polize enthusiasm for the advantage of the throne, this respect for the pretensions of an unjust vanity accuse Necker of thoughts which the genius of democracy disavows and of illusions which it condemns. But it must be observed, that Necker was the minister of a king, until then absolute; that a furious court surrounded him; that he had to deal with obstinate repugnances, and unnumbered obstacles; that his part in the council was to prepare the transformation of the monarchy, not to destroy it; and that he would naturally fear that the whole edifice would crumble, if they shook its two principal columns, the nobility and clergy, too violently. What it is only just to reproach him with is, having kept power on conditions which did not permit him to dare to do good. But the advances of opinion had intoxicated him. He foolishly thought himself capable of conciliating contraries; of imposing sacrifices on the court, modesty on the clergy, resignation on the nobles, and a timid march on a people in motion. To unchain the tempest would have filled him with alarm; to conduct and restrain it did not discourage his pride.

Louis the Sixteenth was at Marly. Necker went thither, accompanied by two ministers, Messieurs de Saint-Priest and de La-Luzerne; it was in the carriage on the way, that he communicated to them the plan which he was about to propose to the deliberation of the council; so precipitate and unforeseen was every thing in those hours of trouble.* In accordance with the plan of Necker, the king, in a royal session, should have summoned the three orders to unite, and giving the royal initiative to their labors as a point of departure, he should himself lay, as the foundation of the expected regeneration, the deliberation in common of the three orders on all questions of general interest; the recognized rights of the states to modify the constitution of the kingdom, provided, that the legislature should remain composed of *at least two chambers*; the abolition of pecuniary privileges in matters of taxation; the admissibility of all citizens to military and civil employments.† An humble programme, and marked with the impress of the genius of England; and yet it was regarded at court as a frightful act of boldness. Necker had communicated it to the Counts de Provence and d'Artois, who had spoken of it to Marie Antoinette. He had no sooner arrived at Marley, than the queen sent for him to come to her. He obeys, finds Marie Antoinette much agitated, and the two brothers of the king animating her by their counsel. They besought to renounce his design, to annihilate his plan; he remained firm.‡ The council then opens, the ideas of the principal minister are then given up to discussion, Louis the Sixteenth consents to them, they are already adopted. . . . But suddenly an officer in waiting appears, approaches the king and speaks to him in a low voice. The king goes out. "It is the queen who sends for him," said M. de Montmorin to Necker, and he was right.§ The deliberation was adjourned. As, however, the image of a pompous dis-

* See in the lettres et instructions de Louis 18, la notice sur M. le Comte de Saint-Priest, p. 96.

† Necker, de la Révolution Française, t. 1. sect. 4. p. 195.

‡ De Barante, Notice sur M. le Comte de Saint-Priest, p. 96.

§ Notice sur M. le Comte de Saint-Priest, p. 97.—Necker, de la Révolution Française, sect. 4. p. 209.

play of strength pleased the courtiers, it was determined that a royal session should take place, and it was fixed for the 22d of June. Then, under pretext that preparations were necessary, but in reality to suspend the labors which it dreaded, the faction closed the hall of the states.

On the 20th of June—and to write this imperishable date, who would not feel moved to the bottom of his soul?—on the 20th of June, 1789, at Versailles, on a wet and dull day, a group of men were seen wandering through the city, and appearing to be in search of quarters. Their name? the National Assembly. Their end? to free a people. Weak in numbers and plain in appearance, they had, however, a controlling aspect, a bold look. Whilst walking about, they talked of the court; its puerile insolence; the temple of the law closed; the soldiery whom they met watching around its inviolable enclosure; of the royal session notified to the representatives of the people by vulgar placards, by the proclamation of heralds, by public rumor, as they would have done of a show; they spoke of resuming the work which had been interrupted, of recommencing it at once, at the risk of life, in any place whatever, and if a building was wanting for the purpose, . . . like Luther after Worms, beneath the open heavens. They passed before the doors which remained closed. But a room was finally opened, and it was only a tennis court. There were no vain ornaments, but naked walls, chairs, a table, benches; nothing which served to mask the majesty of the nation. The people hastened there, they surround the sacred asylum, full of uncertainty and respect. Some get into the galleries, others fasten on to the windows. An octogenarian deputy advances, sick and exhausted; they sustain him. The deliberation begins; they recall the sinister details of the morning, the odious countersign given to the sentinels, and that before the hall of the states, when the deputies were crowding to the gate, this cry had been heard, “carry arms.”† The lot is then cast, they must prepare for a bloody game. Whither shall they transport the country? “Paris calls us,” exclaimed the most animated, “let us go.” Then—and why should we fear to tell it?—there were those who were alarmed, less, doubtless, at the idea of a possible massacre on the highway, than at that of Paris raised, and of the popular fury reaching its extreme limit in a day. By one of those striking blows, by which is recognized the will which leads empires, it was the least fervent of the servants of the revolution, it was Mounier, who proposed the oath of the Tennis Court; and he proposed it, as he has himself declared,‡ without foreseeing its bearing, as a moderate measure, with a view to save the royal authority, to turn aside the bold from their plans, to occupy and foil their passions. “The members of the National Assembly,” said the resolution which Mounier drew up, “will take a solemn oath, never to separate until the constitution of the kingdom and the regeneration of public order are established and affirmed on a solid basis.”§ Bailly reads this

* Précis historique, par Rabaut-Saint-Etienne, p. 86.

† Mémoires de Bailly, t. 1. p. 185.

‡ Mounier, recherches sur les causes qui ont empêché les Français d’être libres, p. 296. De l’influence attribuée aux philosophes sur la Révolution Française, p. 99.

§ Douzième lettre du Comte de Mirabeau à ses commettants. Le point de jour, No. 3.

formula. As the president, he claims the honor of being the first to take the oath. All arms rise, and one cry escapes from all mouths, a spontaneous, irresistible, immense cry. We have before us that scene, the heroic sketch of which the constituent assembly confided to the brush of David, and which was the glory of our fathers. Behold them all. He who, standing on a table, rules the assembly, as calm, as impassable as the law, is Bailly. He who, with his clothes in disorder, his look turned toward the president, holds a pen in his hand and is preparing to write, is the conductor of the *Break of Day*, Bertrand Barère. Robespierre presses both his hands violently on his breast, as if he had two hearts for liberty.* A common exaltation, though differently expressed, shines in Petion, Garat, Le Chapelier, Thouret, Guillotin, the impetuous Dubois-Crancé, the elegant Barnave. With an erect body and lofty head, Mirabeau stamps upon the ground. Siéyes, isolated in the crowd of his colleagues, and seated in the centre of their movement, makes no gesture, looks at no one; he takes the oath in his mind. To-morrow was perhaps before him: who knows if these assembled men would not soon be divided, judged and condemned? Who knows if in the formulary of the oath which Bailly pronounces, his death warrant is not enveloped? They are in the keeping of God. In the mean time, their souls seek one another, their hopes mingle, and the Chartreux dom Gerle, the protestant Rabaut Saint-Etienne, the philosophical curate Emperménil, embrace.

One alone protested and thus added to the grandeur of the sight; for alone to brave the indignation of a whole assembly, and to defend his desperate belief against an enthusiasm so powerful, required no moderate courage. Mounier, who had proposed the oath, became afterwards the apologist of Martin d'Auch,† who refused to take it. The name of this last was placed on the register of the deliberation, and opposite to it, the word *opposed*: so that this noble day terminated by an homage rendered to the rights of human conscience, and by a vengeance truly worthy of liberty.

So much wisdom and vigor should have, we think, led the court to place some gravity in its anger; it did not; and as if it were sufficient to insult danger in order to avoid it, they took pleasure in vain-glorious airs. There had been formed around the queen for some time, a party which affected to place all the hopes of the nobility and the safety of chivalric France in her. This party consisted of the young aristocracy of the sword, and was supported by a small number of fanatical prelates. It set on fire castles, episcopal residences, convents, pulpits, the confessional. It no longer called Marie Antoinette any thing but the intrepid daughter of Maria Theresa, and upon a kind of altars which the faithful erected in the interior of their houses, you might have found the bust of the queen, and have sought in vain for that of the king.‡ Some, with a contempt which they scarcely took pains to hide, attacked the soft condescension of Louis the Sixteenth, his irresolution, his inclination to listen to the applause of the street, his habit of recoiling. Was he a

* The phrase of David when explaining his picture.

† Mounier, de l'influence, etc., p. 109.

‡ Manuscript of M. Sauquaire-Souliné.

gentleman-king? Why did he not go to Rambouillet to occupy himself in clock making, leaving the sceptre and the sword in the more manly hands of the queen? There was too much patience; it had at last become necessary to sweep off this revolutionary rabble. If the people murmured, they had soldiers; if the French regiments should refuse to obey, they had foreign regiments; those whom they hired, those whom they could, at need, call from Germany. It would be a fine sight to see a mass of seditious creatures in rags make head against the Kainserlites, the dragoons de la Tour, the Hungarian cavalry, the Tyrolian chasseurs, and not tremble, merely at the sight of their long moustachios bedaubed with grease. The feudal faction joined bravadoes in action to this ridiculous language* which afflicted the gentlemen of the good cause, and made the grave part of the nobility blush. Then was amassed that treasure of rash humiliations which were destined for the Duke of Orleans; then was prepared that war against Mirabeau, consisting entirely of challenges which he confined himself to entering upon his tablets,† putting off the small combats until after the great battle, and too proud, too sure of himself, to consider himself obliged to prove his courage.

Thus, on one side, were the religion of right, a high-spirited prudence, a measured boldness, on the other many sacrilegious illusions and blind contempt. We need not then be astonished if the Count d'Artois thought to stifle the consequences of the oath of the tennis court, by making them keep back the hall, and if the royal session was put off to the 23d of June, in order that during a whole day, the commons, thrown upon the streets of the city, should offer the sight of a prohibited riotous assembly. But according to the phrase of Madame de Stael, it was to oppose sticks to arms; and those vulgar insults of the court were remarkable for furnishing, each of them, a subject of new triumph to the nation. Princes might profane by their scandalous amusements the place, on which the revolution was to encamp; but could they close the common house, the palace of the people, the church? They took a hall of play from the wandering country; it entered a church.

On the 22d of June, the representatives occupied the church of Saint Louis, which the curate Jacob, though attached to the court, dared not refuse them. The door of the choir suddenly opened, and the assembly of the priests, gravely moved, appeared. They advance, and the archbishop of Vienne announces that the clergy come to submit themselves to the common verification. Religion and the country appeared to be reconciled. These plebeians until then so haughty, hasten respectfully to yield the places of honor to the men of the priesthood, a deference which Barère, in the *break of day*, blames in these words; "are these then the representatives who wish to destroy distinctions?"‡ But here the deference of the third estate was the courtesy of patriotism, the modesty of victory. Two nobles, the Marquis de Blacons and the Count Antoine d'Agoust presented themselves; they were welcome as brothers who had been impatiently expected. Of the one hundred and forty-eight

* Manuscript of M. Sauquaire-Souliné.

† Madame de Stael, *Considerations, &c.*, t. 1. p. 263.

‡ Le Point du Jour, No. 5. p. 32.

members of the clergy united in the national family, there were one hundred and thirty-four curates, five prelates, two grand vicars, six canons, and an abbé commendatory. "Let us print this list," said the commons, and Bailly, with eyes moistened by tears, exclaimed, "It must be printed in letters of gold."

The sea was rising, still rising; the invincible revolution was gaining the heights; and upon the narrow summit which the groaning flood was reaching, the court was at once smiling and threatening. Necker, lately so presumptuous, had fallen into a bitter and sudden discouragement; one day had been enough to prove to him, that endowed with an internal and immense power, the movement might engulph any one who had the pretension to lead it. Weakness of human nature! Necker was the author of perhaps the boldest book, to which the eighteenth century had given birth; he had dug like Jean-Jacques into the causes of misery, the origins of iniquity, and lo, at the sight of that society which was wavering, his soul became filled with sadness. He endeavored beyond doubt to preserve a serene appearance, and his habitual reserve aided him in concealing the heaviness of his thoughts.* But in the secrecy of intimate confidence, he mourned over foreseen disasters, he wept over the dream of his pride which had vanished so rapidly.

On the other hand, the occupation of that council of which he had thought himself the breath and life, was to deface his ideas, to lessen them, so as to make of them a *declaration* of a royal session, almost a bed of justice. The original plan of Necker contained a formal injunction on the three orders, to meet for the purpose of deliberating in common on general affairs; for this imperative disposition was substituted a kind of prayer addressed to the nobility and clergy, providing moreover that the distinction of the three orders should be maintained. The original plan of Necker attributed to the assembly the right of pushing on the revolution to the establishment of a charter, in imitation of the English; they hastened to except *the form of the constitution to be given to the next States General* from all deliberation in common. The original plan of Necker abolished all pecuniary privileges in decisive terms: they determined to refer it on this point to the good will of the priests and nobles, sure that their generosity would sanction it royally. Senseless, dangerous modifications which tended to replace an attempt at the initiatives by a defiance addressed to the new spirit. Messieurs de Montmorin, de Fourqueux, de La Luzerne, de Saint Priest, united in vain with Necker, to combat them; the keeper of the seals, Barentin, the minister of war, Puységur, the minister of the interior, Villedenil, our councilors of state whose aid had been convoked, and finally the princes were against them. One feature will show of what a council thus composed was capable. When they came to the question, whether they should admit all citizens to military employments from rank of services and merit, the Count d'Artois protested ardently that "the king was master of his favors."† The language of Louis the Fourteenth had survived his

* See in the lettres et instructions de Louis 18, la notice sur M. le Comte de Saint-Priest.

† De Barante, Notice sur M. le Comte de Saint-Priest, p. 88.

power; and to continue it, his pale successors should have been ignorant of an hundred years of history. Necker foresaw clearly the consequences.* But what was to be his conduct? Should he abstain from appearing at the royal session? Or placing his popularity at risk, should he go to cover with his presence a monarch reduced to subjection by such fatal counsellors?

On the night of the 22d and 23d, Bailly was awakened in surprise by a noise from the street. Astonished, he rises; he is called for. Three unknown persons, calling themselves deputies, ask for admittance, and inform the dean of the commons, that Necker disapproves of the measures which have been taken; that he would not be present at the session of the next day, and that his dismissal appeared to be inevitable.† The unknown who so earnestly and at this suspicious hour, hastened to testify their solicitude for the third estate were three great lords, the Duke d'Aiguillon, the Count Mathieu de Montmorency, and the future successor of Kleber, the Baron de Menou.

On the 23d of June, Versailles glittered with bayonets. Nothing could be more sinister than was the general aspect of the city. Very vague rumors, but on that very account, alarming, were spread. Here and there were anxious groups, who, violently dispersed by the soldiers, went to reform themselves elsewhere, and increased every minute. There was no useless noise, but the menace of silence was every where. The sky was covered with clouds. As, on the 3d of May, the members of the national assembly, the order which then was the people, were condemned to an humiliating waiting, and whilst the nobles and clergy entered ostentatiously the hall of the States by the principal door, that of the avenue, whilst preceded and followed by the falconry, pages, squires, and four companies of the body guard, the carriage of the king rolled over the pavement; those whom the court called in derision *Messieurs of the third estate*, were stationed before a side door, and crowded to avoid the rain, beneath a narrow gallery half filled with strangers in small cloaks, in imitation of the costume of the deputies.‡ The commons finally entered, but finding the two other orders already placed, they seated themselves mute and irritated. The seat intended for Necker was empty. Louis the Sixteenth began in these words: "Messieurs, I thought I had done all that was in my power for the good of my people, when I determined to assemble you," and he complained bitterly of the divisions which had followed. The keeper of the seals then going towards the throne, and kneeling, the king ordered the assembly to be covered. The nobles alone disobeyed,§ and preserving in an inverse sense, since it was necessary, the frivolous distinctions to which their pride was attached, they remained bareheaded before the plebeians who covered themselves.

The keeper of the seals read a first declaration which erased the decrees of the commons, prohibited imperative mandates, and maintained the deliberation by orders. A second declaration, a summing up of *the benefits which the king was willing to grant to his people*, announced the

* Necker, de la Révolution Française, sect. 4. p. 223.

† Mémoires de Bailly, t. 1. p. 203.

‡ Ibid. t. 2. p. 207.

§ Ibid. t. 1. p. 210.

vote of the taxes, the abolition of the *corvée*, of mortmain, of the right of francief, the restriction of the right of hunting, the substitution of a regular enrolment for the drawing of the soldiery, the suppression of the word *taille*, the organization of provincial states. There was nothing about the organic renewal of the constitution of the kingdom, or the participation of the States General in legislative power. The states were permitted to seek the means of reconciling the liberty of the press with the respect due to morals, religion, the honor of the citizen, and individual liberty with the interest of families or the surety of the state. They showed a disposition to sanction the destruction of pecuniary privileges, if it pleased the privileged to make the sacrifice. Among the properties absolutely and for ever inviolable, were *tithes, quit-rents, rentes, signorial and feudal rights and duties*.^{*} Some nobles did not blush to break out into egotistical transports when this latter article was read, thus proving "that they had too much pride for their avarice, or too much avarice for their pride."[†]

The commons remained motionless and silent; Louis the Sixteenth appeared confounded. Collecting, however, his strength, and by a factitious exaggeration of energy, deceiving himself, he repeated harshly the sharp and foolish expressions of which his part was composed, "I have until now done every thing for the happiness of my people, and it is perhaps rare that the only ambition of a sovereign should be to obtain from his subjects a final agreement to accept his benefits." In a sharp tone he ordered the assembly to separate, and left the room, followed by the nobility and some prelates.

Then passed a scene which lived in the bottom of all remembrances, but to which modern historians have added features that have altered its physiognomy and bearing. Until then the commons had had a direct affair only with the priesthood and the aristocracy, now it was royalty in person which appeared to descend into the lists. Burgherism was very willing to overthrow the nobility, to bring down the clergy, but the regime of royalty without despotism suited it; it perceived, as will be soon seen, that it would have need of the throne . . . against the people. Thus when after the king had gone out, the grand master of ceremonies, M. de Brézé, said to the dean of the commons, who had remained in their places, "Sir, you have heard the order of the king," there was a moment of uncertainty, of mournful stupor,[‡] and not daring openly to resist the envoy of the monarch, Bailly said to those around him, "*I think the assembled nation cannot receive the order.*"[§] But at this decisive moment, Mirabeau advances, gloriously usurps the functions of Bailly, who was astonished and afflicted,^{||} and without any affectation of disdain and without violence, but on the contrary with much calmness and reflective firmness, addresses this haughty language to M. de Brézé: "I inform

^{*} Moniteur, session of the 23d of June, 1789.

[†] Treizième lettre du Comte de Mirabeau à ses Commettants.

[‡] "It was this with which Mirabeau reproached the third estate," adds M. Lucas Montigny, *Mémoires de Mirabeau*, t. 6. p. 88, 1835.

[§] "It has been said and repeated that I made this reply to M. de Brézé. I respected the king too much to make such an answer" (to M. de Brézé.) *Mémoires de Bailly*, t. 1. p. 214.

^{||} *Ibid.*, p. 215.

you that if you are commissioned to expel us from this, you will have to ask for orders to employ force, for we will not leave our places except by the power of the bayonet."* The assembly exclaimed, "Such is our vow." The Marquis de Brezé went to render an account of his mission to Louis the Sixteenth, and the assembly, strong in the confidence of its rights, went to deliberation. The Jansenist Camus, with a grave energy, demanded the confirmation of the previous decrees. "Add," said the curates who were faithful to the cause of the commons, "add that the deliberation took place in our presence ;"† and Sièyes dropped those words which have remained so celebrated, "You are to-day what you were yesterday." The court being desirous of interrupting the session at any price, workmen entered‡ with hammers in their hands, to take down the hanging and the golden fringed canopy, and to carry away the throne. An unexpected sight, in which no one yet saw a living prophecy ; and yet it was the image of the people appearing in their turn upon the scene, and carrying away the monarchy. Intimidation was also tried. The body guard, who, after having accompanied the king to the palace, had started for Saint Germain, received orders at Rocquencourt, to return . . . they arrived at a gallop. But at the moment when they reached the doors of the chamber, the assembly, with a prudence full of majesty, rose, and, on motion of Mirabeau, assured its victory by declaring itself inviolable.

Such was the blindness of the nobility, that during this time it was hastening to the chateau to thank its pretended saviours. The first visit was to the Count d'Artois, who received it with much courtesy and ease. They had also thanks to address to the Count de Provence ; but retired in his dissimulation, that prince was careful not to comply with homages which were those of abused presumption.§ Louis the Sixteenth had fallen into a gloomy apathy after the royal session, and when they came to him to announce the resistance of the assembly, words full of discouragement witnessed the fatigue of his soul. The nobles forgot him, they did not forget the queen. She was in the saloon of play. They are presented to her, and with a smile on her lip and a sparkling glance, she held out the royal infant, saying, "I give him to the nobility." She gave him to death.||

The illusion was, however, very soon dissipated, for that scene of mere intoxication was not yet over, when the popular noise carried a name to the heart of Marie Antoinette, which made her start. Necker had mortally offended her in condemning the royal session by his absence,¶ and

* Such was the true reply of Mirabeau, and he himself so relates it in his journal. (Treizième lettre du Comte de Mirabeau à ses Commettants.) The speech, "where are the enemies of the nation ? Is Catiline at our doors ?" etc.; the famous phrase, "go tell your master;" the antithetical comparison of the power of the people and the power of the bayonet, are all to be ranked among historical errors. There is no trace of them in the *Moniteur*, nor the *Mémoires* of Bailly, who was present, nor in the *Dawn of Day* of Barrière, who was also present, nor finally in the very circumstantial statement which Mirabeau himself has given of this session.

Such alterations should be exposed, because they give an entirely false idea of the dispositions of burgherism, and particularly of those of Mirabeau.

† *Le Point de Jour*, No. 7. ‡ *Mémoires de Ferrières*, t. 1. p. 59.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 61.

¶ *Mémoires de Madame Campan*, chap. 14. p. 45.

it was towards that same Necker that the unanimous, formidable wishes of the multitude were then mounting. They inundated the courts of the chateau, and every thing soon resounded with tumultuous cries, threats and insults. The word *aristocrane* was uttered, an expression at once burlesque and sinister, which, in the language of popular hatred, indicated at once the opinions of the Count d'Artois, and a price set upon his head.* The court had not yet become familiar with insurrections; it trembled. It was necessary to send for Necker, who having given in his resignation, was surrounded by a crowd of furious or astounded visitors. The queen was compelled to employ entreaties to induce him to continue as minister.† He promised not to abandon that monarchy which supplicated him; and as he returned to his house, passing on foot through the court-yards of the chateau, a man fell on his knees before him, whilst the shout resounded from all sides "remain."‡ Bonfires were kindled that night, and violent men went about the city brandishing torches.

Old France was decidedly conquered, but it was unwilling either to accept or avow its defeat. The Count de Clermont-Tonnerre and Lally Tollendal having proposed to the chamber of the nobility to unite with the third estate, there was a long burst of rage among all these assembled gentlemen. Patriotic words were, however, heard. "I have thirteen thousand livres of rentes," said M. de Montcalm, "I would sacrifice the half of them to obtain this so much to be desired union; and my six children will not disavow me."§ These sentiments were, however, far from being those of the majority. D'Epréménil entreated his colleagues to close around the monarchy, which *factional men* were seeking to destroy; and the discussion becoming warm, the Duke de Caylus sprung from his seat with his hand on the hilt of his sword.|| Cazalès exclaimed to the minority, "You unite with the third estate? You will not dare to do it." They replied by going to the hall of the states on the 25th of June, in the midst of an immense concourse of people. They were forty-seven in number; the Counts de Montmorency, de Clermont-Tonnerre, de Lally Tollendal, de Lusignan, de Castellane, de Crillon, the Viscount de Toulangeon, the Marquis de la Tour Maubourg, the Dukes de la Rochefoucauld, de Luyues, etc. . . . The Duke of Orleans advanced at their head in his carriage. The crowd which surrounded the hall, cheered at his approach, and he, leaning from his carriage door, said, "My friends, no noise now. I wish for your happiness; you will applaud to-night, if you choose."¶ The assembly offered him the presidency after Bailly; he refused it.

A new light then daily, hourly illuminated the depths of the abyss which was opened but a few paces from the chateau. But with certain nobles the persistence in blindness was so absolute that this characteristic saying of a courtier was quoted: "I am very sorry for the forty-seven. Their families are now dishonored and nobody will be willing to ally himself with them."***

* Challamel, Histoire-Musée de la République, p. 26.

† Mémoires de Weber, t. 1. p. 363.

‡ Moniteur, of the 24th to the 27th of June.

§ Le Point du Jour, No. 9.

|| Droz, Histoire du Règne de Louis Seize, p. 251.

¶ Beaulieu, Essais historiques, t. 1. p. 259.

*** Rabaut Saint Etienne, Précis historique, p. 92.

Paris was, however, in a ferment. A deputation came to carry the congratulations and encouragements of the Hotel de Ville to the national assembly; an address, very numerously signed, was received from the Palais Royal, which breathed war; they learned that the French guards had taken a step towards revolt; and le Chapelier, Glaizen, the deputies of Brittany, Mirabeau, Sièyes, Petion, Barnave, founded at Versailles that *Breton Club*, which, transported to Paris, was soon to be the club of the Jacobins.* Every thing then concurred to increase the energy of the movement, and there is no necessity to have recurrence to the hypothesis of a plot to explain the emeute in which M. de Juigné, the archbishop of Paris, had almost perished. This prelate had exhibited a fanatical obstinacy in retarding the union of the order of the clergy with the commons; the people were excited against him. As he was passing through the city, the crowd recognize his carriage, and raging, hurry after it. He takes refuge in the mission house. The irritated people wish to break in the doors; a siege begins. M. de Colbert, bishop of Rodez, one of the five prelates who had united with the national assembly, appeared at this juncture. The most furious are immediately appeased; they surround the bishop, load him with blessings, and raising him upon their shoulders and calling him their friend,† decree to him a triumph improvised by gratitude. M. de Juigné dared resist no longer; he made his submission on the 26th of June. The same men who had insulted him on the preceding evening, awaited his passage and covered him with applause. He entered the assembly preceded by the archbishop of Bourdeaux, who served as his introducer, or rather as his surety. The majority of the nobility remained to be reduced.

The chateau is suddenly filled with alarm. It is said and repeated, and the source of the rumors remained unknown, that the plan of a vast massacre had been projected, and that one hundred thousand rebels are on their march. Necker, being interrogated, abstained from dissipating an alarm which he thought to be useful; and the Duke de Luxemburg, the president of the order of the nobility, was sent for in haste. When he arrived, the royal family were assembled around Louis the Sixteenth; the princes were frightened, the queen was in tears.‡ “Monsieur de Luxemburg,” said Louis the Sixteenth, “I beseech the order of the nobility to unite with the other two; and if that is not enough, I will it;” and he handed him a letter for the dissentients. We had already observed, and the close of this recital will furnish tragical marks of it, the most passionate part of the nobility no longer regarded Louis the Sixteenth as their true king. In despair at seeing the destiny of the feudal party in such trembling hands, it cast itself impetuously both towards the Count d’Artois, whose ignorance urged him on to confide every thing to the chances of boldness, and towards the queen whom they knew to be subject to fits of melancholy dejection and to sudden alarms, but on the other hand, to be capable of applauding extreme resolutions. Thus the orders of Louis the Sixteenth were not decisive on the chamber of the

* Barruel, *Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire du Jacobinisme*, t. 5. p. 100.

† Beaulieu, *Essais historiques*, t. 1. p. 277.

‡ *Mémoires de Ferrières*, t. 1. p. 66.

nobility. Should they suffer the kingdom to be at the mercy of the king? Why, if it were necessary, should they not defend the monarchy against the monarch? Cazales, in the ardor of an untamed conviction, did not fear to say so. But the assembly had received a new missive which said that the life of the king was threatened. All rose and the union was determined upon; only the letter which now caused obedience was from the Count d'Artois and not Louis the Sixteenth.

There were ulterior protests. Many demanded that there should be an entry of their efforts to cause the deliberation by orders to prevail, in conformity with their cahiers. And it is somewhat remarkable, that at the foot of the protest which was drawn up in this sense, was read the name of the Marquis de la Fayette.* But what did reservations matter?

Thus was brought about on the 27th of June, the reconciliation of the nobles with the commons, a reconciliation, at the bottom of which the implacable resentment of defeat was germinating, and whose falsehood was only too visible in the constrained attitude of the new comers, in the cloud on their brow and their deep silence.

Be that as it may, the happy news was no sooner spread abroad than the popular joy broke forth in a thousand forms. But all looks were turned towards the new power. The royalty was no longer in the palace of Louis the Sixteenth, it was in the hall of the states. The soldiers themselves thought so, and whilst the guards of the king refused to go their usual rounds in the courts of the chateau of Versailles, two of them entered the national assembly in disguise, to hand to the president, as to the true monarch, a complaint against their colonel. They were recognized and arrested, but the crowd hastening to them and protecting them by its shouts, they were at once set at liberty.† It has been said, moreover, that the people studied to soften the bitterness of their defeat to the ancient rulers; for their cheers now were not only for Louis the Sixteenth, but for the queen and the Count d'Artois himself. Tumultuous and repeated invitations called Marie Antoinette to a balcony, and if her heart was moved by these unmerited homages, the emotion was her chastisement. Versailles was illuminated.

There was no less excitement at Paris.—Placards, stamps, engravings, allegories, served to express the joy caused by an union of the three orders. A triangle was seen in every public square, and in every street, watch dials bore the sword, the cross and the rake—and 4 plus 12 equalling 16, Louis the Sixteenth was declared to be worth himself, if he were submissive, Henry the Fourth and Louis the Twelfth,§ Sallies familiar to French genius, and which did not prevent violent manifestations. The military authorities were so alarmed that four companies of French guards received orders to load their guns. They disobeyed, forced their barracks and traversed the capital, exclaiming, "*Hurrah for the third estate. We are the soldiers of the nation,*" and followed by an immense multitude more than an hundred guards reached the Palais

* Beaulieu, *Essais historiques*, t. 1. p. 267.

† Lettre à M. le Marquis de Luchet, Paris, 25th of July, 1789. ‡ Ibid.

§ Challamel, *Histoire-Musée de la République Française*, p. 26. Lettre à M. le Marquis de Luchet.

demanded to fraternize with the people there, and carrying full of wine. Versailles had embraced Paris, Paris embraced

France.

That assembly of lately obscure plebeians appeared then triumphant on the summit of the state. On the 10th of June it had grown strong, on the 17th it took the name of the *National Assembly*; on the 20th it took the heroic oath of the Tennis Court; on the 22d it had conquered the clergy; on the 23d it had declared itself sovereign, and on the 27th it had tamed the nobility. And now, alas, the mistakes are about to happen. Now we shall have to recount that between burgherism and the people. . . . But let us repose an instant in the impression of an imposing triumph, and let not bitter words, too soon pronounced, disturb this august fête of our recollections; yes, we can say unreservedly and with emotion and pride, that up to this day at least, burgherism was the Revolution, was the people.

CHAPTER IX.

THE APPEAL TO FORCE.

Alarms of victorious Burgherism—Singular language of Mirabeau—Paris starving—The suspicions of Marat—The National Assembly before the problem of famine; denunciation of the monopolizers stifled—Heroic occupations of the people—Soldiers delivered by the people—Louis the Sixteenth abandoned by the nobility, is adopted by Burgherism—The King of the proprietors—Civil war prepared—Cabal of Montgouie—Plots of the Court denounced by Mirabeau—Burgherism seeks to oppose Louis the Sixteenth to the party of the Queen—Blindness of Louis the Sixteenth—A field of battle around Paris—Dumouriez at Caen—The court and the Breton Club—The Duke of Orleans before the Orleanists; iniquitous artifices; nocturnal scene—Attitude of Paris menaced—False sleep of Louis the Sixteenth.

HERE commences an historical revolution whose character it is important to mark well, and whose phases we shall have to follow.

"I said," relates Bailly, "that wherever the people are in great numbers, there they are the masters."* The leaders had seen with alarm this people assisting at their sessions, seating themselves in the hall of the public debates, as if they also were holding there their States General. Let us leave a sovereignty which was unbaptized and without black cloaks to look that of the assembly in the face! Should it be permitted, that at the sight of the tribunes invaded by an imperious crowd, the royalist might say, as did that prince of antiquity, "I see two Thebes and two suns."† The errors or the artifices of language cannot change the nature of things. Siéyes had carefully confounded the bourgeois and the people under the common name of the third estate; there were in it the rich and poor, plebeians of fashion and of the streets. Among

* Mémoires de Bailly, t. 1. p. 225.

† Mémoires de Rivarol, t. 1. p. 95. Collection Berville et Barrière.

the men who together demanded liberty, some possessed every permitted enjoyment; education, reputation and wealth; others on the contrary resembled a paralytic whose right to walk is admitted and by whom it is consequently desired, at the same time that the liberty they sought was but an illusory conquest, the noise of a clarion. This is what the assembly which had become victorious foresaw. It trembled lest the claims of the serfs of wages should go beyond those of a beaten down nobility, a submissive clergy, an abased monarchy. It trembled whilst it triumphed.

There was one man especially who feared the people, it was Mirabeau; so long as he was uncertain of success he had exhibited extraordinary warmth in urging on popular movements. Immediately after the session of the 23d of June, of which he published a bold and provoking account, he had called the multitude to him. "Why should we hide the knowledge of our deliberations from it?" he exclaimed. "What mean these words, *decency, good order*? Here, indecency would consist in mystery and disorder in secrecy."* But when the final union of the orders, the returns of Louis the Sixteenth, the humiliation of the nobility, the apparent resignation of the queen, induced him to believe that they had no longer to dread their old enemies, his language suddenly changed surprisingly, and the agitator of the evening before demanded that on the standard of a progressive revolution should be written this formulary of societies in a state of repose; the maintenance of the public order.

"Messieurs," he said, on the 27th of June, "the day of the 23d has made an impression, whose consequences I fear, upon this restless and unfortunate people. Where the representatives of the nation saw but an error of authority, the people thought they saw a formal design to attack their rights and their powers. It has not yet an opportunity to know all the firmness of its representatives. Its confidence in them has not yet roots sufficiently deep."† And not content with establishing as it were a line of separation between the representatives of the nation and the people, not content with sowing distrust, he studiously drew a dark picture of popular agitations. He now reproved those passions he had himself excited, and insisted that they should guard against *seditions auxiliaries*.‡ He did not even cover the session of the 23d of June with his tolerance; and yet he took that very session as a text to deliver an eulogy on Louis the Sixteenth, in which a kind of tender and respectful pity was mingled with admiration. When the king did evil, he was deceived, when left to himself, he always did right,§ and he proposed an address to the electors which recommended to them to contribute to the *maintenance of order, the public tranquillity, the authority of the laws and their ministers*.||

Under other circumstances such language would perhaps have been, that of wisdom and reason, but to proclaim the anger of the oppressed, suspected, without having labored to destroy the principle of all oppressions, misery; to decry the tumultuous life of the forum because he thought he had drawn enough advantage for himself from its warmth;

* Treizième lettre du Comte de Mirabeau à ses Commettants.

† Moniteur, Session of the 27th of June, 1789. ‡ Ibid. Digitized by Google. § Ibid. || Ibid.

to call upon the revolution to halt, when it was still so far from the true end of its burning pilgrimage, . . . was to permit too much difference from and distrust of the people to appear.

Mirabeau moreover, knew those well to whom he addressed his speech. He remembered that in the session of the 17th of June, he had alarmed them, when he surrendered himself to the inspirations of the tribune. He knew that the formula of the oath of the tennis court, consecrated the maintenance of the principles of the monarchy.* He finally remembered with what ardor, these words of Turgot in the church of St. Louis, at the time the union of the clergy and the commons had been applauded; "There is no happy event for our country, which we should not hasten to communicate to the best of kings."† The truth is that far from desiring to overthrow the throne, burgherism thought already of making a shelter of it. Disowned by his nobility, it was among those commons lately so stubborn, that Louis the Sixteenth found his most faithful and alarmed servants. He ceased to be the king of the gentlemen, he became the king of the proprietors.

During this time, thousands of unfortunates, with their bodies covered with rags for clothes, their faces sharpened by hunger and a livid tint, pressed around the doors of the bakers in Paris, and passed half their time there in terrible impatience. Famine was raging, the price of bread varying between four sols and four sols and a half a pound,‡ which was a homicidal price at that period. There was besides no labor, no wages, and among these pale day laborers, were few who had not left children at home crying from hunger. But this bread of which it was difficult to obtain a morsel, was terrible and bitter; it caused inflammation of the throat and heat in the stomach. The handmills established at the military school, furnished only sour meal of a yellow color and disagreeable smell, and forming masses so hard, that it was necessary to use a hatchet to detach portions of it.§ This was the only aliment of the people, and as all France was suffering, the capital saw bands of unknown persons in rags, entering it hourly, holding long sticks in their hands, and dragging themselves along bent beneath their empty sacks,|| a crowd without a home or a to-morrow, whom the provinces in distress rejected upon starving Paris. Misery thus assumed frightful aspects; the markets, more and more stormy appeared to resemble fields of battle; the soldiers made a lane for convoys along the Seine, but universal anxiety arrested the transports when about to depart; the parliaments of Burgundy, Franche Comté and Nancy prohibited the export of grain,¶ and instead of the expected corn, consumers arrived with the irresistible movement

* *Moniteur*, from June 20th to 24, 1789.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Marat, Criminelle-Neckero-logie*, p. 22 et 23, second chief accusation. Geneva Pellet, 1790. This pamphlet, in which Necker is attacked with unjust violence, contains by the side of accusations improved and dictated by a blind hatred, curious facts, whose exactness we have verified. See upon the famine and price of bread, *le premier pas à faire ou la cri de l'indigence*, p. 6. with these words of Sallust, for a motto; *Ille me cupido exercet ut quocumque modo et quamprimum respublica adjavetur*. 1789.

§ *L'Ami du Roi*, etc. chap. 39. p. 39.

|| *Mémoires de Besenval*, t. 2. p. 344.

¶ See in No. 191 of the *Journal de Paris*, (supplement,) *le mémoire instructif remis de la part du roi au comité des subsistances, par le directeur général des finances*.

of the rising tide; and every night in tragical assemblies, held at the house of the lieutenant of the police,* this question was renewed, how is Paris to be fed?

What has not been remarked and which is worthy of eternal recollection is, that the cry then uttered by the people was not that of poverty. On the very doors of the bakers' shops, where only an avaricious and murderous food was kept for them, they talked of the constitution to be made, of the national assembly to be defended. The slaves of famine claimed the freedom of the mind.

Such self-denial was still more magnanimous, since the evil could not be attributed to the rigors of the season only. The committee of subsistence had asked for information from Necker; he published a statement, in which it was said, that since his entrance on public business in August, 1788, the ministry had exhausted itself in efforts to prevent the crisis already foreseen; that the export of grain had been severely prohibited, and its import encouraged by large premiums; that the king had brought in haste, with his own money, at his own risk, a billion four hundred millions of quintals of rice, rye, barley, wheat and meal from foreign countries; that internal circulation had been powerfully favored; that during the last winter the water-mills and wind-mills had remained motionless around Paris, the former on account of the ice, and the latter from the inaction of the air, and that they had constructed hand-mills at a great expense; that in a word, nothing had been neglected which human wisdom prescribed.† But how was it to be explained that such active measures should have been so sterile? What proportion of the public misfortunes was attributable to the criminal industry of the monopolists? Necker timidly observed, that it was *hardly creditable* that important reserves of corn should have been made at a period so near the new harvest, and when abundant granaries would not have been safe. Still he avowed in formal terms, "that he had frequently to complain of the cupidity of speculators;"‡ and he even gave it to be understood that the government was condemned to much discretion, the statesman fearing in critical times, to initiate alarms and surrender the *secret of his thoughts*.§

There are withholdings which sound to the heart like avowals. The *instructive statement* contained such. Vehement protests besides resounded. A pamphlet styled, *The first step to be taken*, demanded that an inquiry should be set on foot about the monopolizings. "Men without bowels," exclaimed the writer to the monopolists, "our fruitful fields have entered your parks."|| Gorsas published his journal *Le Courier de Versailles à Paris*; he published in it a letter from the *Courrier de Dieppe*, from which it appeared that in Normandy, even the growing wheat was monopolized, and that the inhabitants of Dieppe were pushed to despair. "Do you know of what use the premiums awarded to importation are? To awaken cupidity. A ship arrives here, it obtains the bounty; then this same grain is clandestinely re-shipped, and goes to

† *Mémoires de Besenval, t. 2. p. 344.

† See the mémoire instructif in the supplement to No. 191, of the Journal de Paris.

† Ibid.

§ Ibid.

|| Le premier pas à faire, p. 13.

another port to obtain new bounties; so that but a small quantity of rotten corn remains in store, or goes from market to market. . . . But then denounce that to the States General, honest man that you are."* On his side, the then silent observer of underhand practices, the physician Marat, was then employed in amassing the materials for future accusations, which were frequently calumnious, but also frequently full of light; for from believing in evil, this implacable being acquired a singular clear-sightedness. If others were the thought of the revolution, if others were its anger, Marat was its suspicion.

The national assembly could no longer abstain. On the 4th of July, they decided after a long discussion, that six deputies should be admitted from St. Domingo,† when Dupont de Nemours, the reporter of the committee of subsistence, rose. The circumstance was a solemn one from its commencement, the assembly had raised its debates to sublime heights. What were they to do for the people destitute of labor and bread, or rather what were they to do, that in future the people should not be destitute of labor and bread? A great question which now contains all that agitates and divides us, a supreme question, which less tardily approached, would have spared Europe frightful rendings, and which modern societies will soon have to resolve under pain of death. But the triumphant doctrine in the eighteenth century had been that of individualism,‡ that of indifference on the part of the state in industrial matters, and this was but too apparent in the report of the committee of subsistence. The right to labor, the vices inherent in the regime of wages, the dangers of rivalry, the means of emancipating the common herd, nothing which particularly interested the people was pointed out, as likely to become an object of ulterior examination. They confined themselves, in view of the urgency of the case, to proposing the following measures:—To open a voluntary subscription; to authorize the governments of the provincial states and the municipalities to make advances under the guarantee of the nation and the inspection of the assembly, which the people required for their solace—to authorize in the provinces in which the harvest should not be gathered, a contribution of twenty or ten sols a head, which eight or ten of the richest citizens should advance—to prohibit the export of grain until the month of November, 1790.§

This was to reduce to a small matter the interference of the regenerators promised to France; and yet most of the bureaux remained behind this limit. According to Lally Tollendal, they should content themselves with thanking the king, prohibiting exportation until the month of November, and favoring the internal circulation.|| Mounier maintained that the plans proposed did not spring from the assembly;¶ that there was no necessity to decree a benevolent subscription; that a poll tax would be injurious to the nation, whose generosity it would have the

* Le Courrier de Versailles à Paris, No. 4.

† Moniteur, session of July the 4th, 1789.

‡ See the first part of this work, book 3. chap. 3.

§ Moniteur, session of July 4th, 1789.

|| Ibid. session of July 6th.

¶ "In our days," M. Sauzet, the president of the chamber of deputies, said, "it is not for the chamber to give work to workmen."

appearance of constraining, and that leaving to the committee the care of continuing its researches, the assembly should, before every thing else, exclusively occupy itself about the constitution.* In vain did Petion propose a loan in the name of the twenty-first bureau;† they replied to him that the mandates did not permit them to vote taxes or loans, until the constitution was finished. Finally, Mirabeau having demanded that they should suspend the deliberations until they had received certain information of capital importance, the holy question of feeding the people was lost sight of, and it happened in the characteristic words of Dupont de Nemours, that *the assembled nation could only mourn over the nation.*‡

Thus, whilst the people, in generous self-forgetfulness, notwithstanding their misery and their want of labor and food, were making the conquest of political rights the dearest of their occupations, in the assembly they were passing on to the order of the day, notwithstanding social miseries, and the hunger of the people.

We may mourn over this; but we should perhaps run the risk of being unjust, by being indignant at it, for very little light had pierced the darkness in which social science had remained until then covered; the education of the intellect by love, had not then commenced; they did not know that poverty is always slavery; and the legislators of the bourgeois did not see how inconsistent those were who believed in the fatality of misery, and yet did not believe in the fatality of despotism. It was necessary, however, that this grand problem of the destruction of modern slavery should be laid down, and it was in fact done. But, alas, pressed to study it in the midst of its fiercest combats, the revolution could only read, under arms, a book opened in blood.

Let us conceal nothing; there are omissions which are the hypocrisy of history. After the session of the 4th of July, a deputy complained with bitterness of the darkness in which they appeared to wish to enshroud the hideous affair of the monopolies, adding, that on that very morning he had denounced several monopolists, and had been much surprised at the manner in which his warnings had been received.§ In the session of the 6th of July, Bouche having announced that he knew the culprits, that he had proofs, and that a formal denunciation would take place on the next day, Gorsas|| relates, that a general alarm pervaded the assembly. On the next day they awaited the formidable revelations: entire silence prevailed. The truth had been stifled between the two days, from fear, doubtless, that to pursue the monopolists before a starving multitude, would be a signal for murder.

The crime of those who speculated on the famine being thus protected by its very enormity, the sufferings of the people increased so as to be only comparable with the heroism of their resignation. The following passage had been much remarked in the *Instructive Statement*: "The

* *Moniteur*, session of the 6th of July.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.* session of the 4th of July.

§ *Le Courrier de Versailles à Paris*, No. 2.

|| *Ibid.*—The *Moniteur* perverts all this. It gives the following account of the announced denunciation: "Bouche hopes to inform the assembly of some interesting discoveries."

king has said that, if the necessity of circumstances compelled him to content himself with mixed bread of rye and wheat, there should be but one kind for the rich and the poor, and that it should be served on his table.* This touching promise was not realized. The bread which appeared on the table of the king, the deputies, the ministers, the courtiers, was of the best quality, served abundantly, and furnished by the bakers in person. It was known, and the comparison was only made in royalist journals.† The speech of a barbarous farmer of the revenue to the unfortunate who complained of the famine, was also known, "we'll eat flints;"‡ and yet what continued to engage the public mind, was only the grandeur of our new destinies; so much energy in this moral life did the revolution bring to the people.

And it was not only the people of the workshops who were burning with this holy enthusiasm; it was also the people of the camp. Warned, that if fidelity to all creates the chivalry of the free man, fidelity to one alone frequently constitutes the chivalry of the slave; murmuring beneath the yoke of that severe and humiliating discipline which the Count de Saint-Germain had borrowed from the military manners of Germany; indignant, finally, at not being able, even with their blood, to carve for themselves a road towards the high grades, and that they dared to oppose their plebeian courage to them, the soldiers wished for other flags. One fact, which created a lively sensation at court, had shown, since the 20th of June, the disposition of the army. On that day, about seven o'clock in the evening, the principal agitators of the Palais Royal were assembled at the Café de Foy, their usual meeting place, when a letter was thrown by some unknown person into the midst of the group. It was immediately opened, and read in a loud voice; it announced that eleven guards had been carried to the Abbaye, for having refused to load their pieces; and that the following night they were to be transferred to the Bicetre, a homicidal prison, destined for the vilest criminals. At this news, a bold young man, Loustalot, the editor of the journal, *the Revolutions of Paris*, springs into the garden, mounts a chair, and gathers a crowd around him, calling out, "to the Abbaye, to the Abbaye." They applaud him, become animated with rage, and start. The violent cortege is increased on its way by workmen returning from their work, and the keeper of the prison soon hears four thousand besiegers howling around it, many of whom were armed with axes and crowbars. Resistance was useless, the keys were given up;§ but at that very moment some cavalry arrived, with slackened rein and sword in hand. The people, far from being alarmed, seized the horses by the bridle; they cry out to the soldiers that they are there to save their companions in arms, their brethren. The dragoons, softened, sheath their swords and raise their caps in sign of peace. The guards, delivered, were led in triumph to the Palais Royal, where they slept during the night, whilst the people watched as

* Supplement to No. 171 of the Journal de Paris.

† L'Ami du roi, the third cahier, quoted in the *histoire parlementaire*, t. 2. Livraison, 3. p. 40.

‡ Le premier pas à faire, p. 14.

§ "Some writers have published that the doors of the prison were forced, and all the prisoners set at liberty. This assertion is entirely false." Beaulieu, *Essais Historiques*, t. 1. p. 287.

sentinels over them. On the next day they were lodged at the Hotel de Geneve; purses and baskets, suspended on their account by ribbons from the windows, were filled with patriotic offerings, and the Palais Royal sent to ask the intercession of the National Assembly in their favor.

Then broke out the fear with which its own victories inspired the assembly; for the homage rendered to its sovereignty alarmed it. Some are astonished and irritated at this alliance concluded between the artisan and the soldier in the streets of Paris, the capital of revolts; others in an animated tone pronounced against an essay which sought to transform the representatives of the nation into the *tribunes of an unbridled people*.* To the less timid remarks of Rewbel and La Chapelier are opposed on all sides the respect due to the executive power. Though sick and scarcely able to stand, Mirabeau rises and proposes that they should adopt a catechism of public order, and hasten to condemn popular agitations.† An address drawn up in this sense had been already presented by him; he endeavors to read it again, but strength abandons him and his voice fails. A decree was finally passed, in these terms: "The National Assembly mourns over the troubles which are now agitating Paris. . . . A deputation must be sent to the king, to beseech him to employ, in the re-establishment of order, the infalible means of clemency and goodness, which are so natural to his heart, and of the confidence which his good people will always deserve." The assembly protested moreover its profound attachment to the royal authority, *on which the security of the empire depended*.‡

A deputation of sixteen members carried the address to Louis the Sixteenth, who replied, "So long as the nation will confide in me, all will go well." He contented himself with exacting, as a condition of his clemency, that the guards should return to their prison. This they did, and the order for their liberation was given when some electors reached Versailles who were commissioned by their colleagues not to return without the pardon of the soldiers.

We have seen in proportion as the revolution advanced, that alarmed burgherism closed round the throne, and sought an inviolable chief in Louis the Sixteenth. But on that very account the representatives of old France hastened to draw the royalty to them; so that, confided to a prince who did not know how either to wear it or defend it, the royal purple was tearing in the hands of the opposite parties. They tore it to shreds, and when the formidable hour sounded, they found that in sporting with the power of the unfortunate Louis the Sixteenth, they had also sported with his head.

Versailles however assumed for some days, a sinister and suspicious appearance; suspicious uniforms and unknown figures were alone seen in the streets. Men who were recently only remarkable for the paleness of their faces, were now met carrying a high head, smiling in a fatal manner, and casting looks full of defiance. In the assembly, certain noble

* Quinzième lettre du Comte de Mirabeau à ses commettants.

† See the account given of this session by Mirabeau himself, in his Quinzième lettre à ses commettants.

‡ Ibid.

deputies leaving their places as legislators* vacant, seated themselves among the crowd as mere lookers on, with irony upon their lips. Strange words were quoted as having escaped from the Abbé de Vermond, in the midst of the fumes of wine.† The echoes of the *Œil-de-bœuf*, repeated threats made, it was said, by the Prince de Henin and the Duke de la Trémouille; secret committees of the Count de Flahaut at the Louvre,‡ were anxiously spoken of. What was going on?

There was then at Montrouge a cabal which the intimates of the Duke of Orleans held, the dark inspirers of his patriotism or the artisans of his ambition. The Count de Genlis, the Marquis de Sillery and de Latouche figured in it. There Choderlos de Laclos ruled, an active and inflammatory spirit beneath an exterior of calmness, a fatal genius, who by the romance of *Liaisons dangereuses*, the most profound of impure books, had forcibly seized on reputation and assured for himself a place between astonishment and contempt, between admiration and horror. It was said of him that he was the most dangerous of intimates for his friends. But it was the folly, the madness of the Duke of Orleans to take pleasure only in suspicious relations, and to permit bold adventurers to labor in his name for the triumph of pretensions he did not entertain. It was for this that the conspirators of the cabal of Montrouge were employing themselves with a sombre impatience; and as they had information from the court, they were not long in knowing the details of the web they were weaving there. On the other hand secret information reached the Breton Club which counted at this period among its habitual attendants, Buzot, Lanjuinais, the Abbé Gregoire, Robespierre, and which was confined to the people.

A singular thing, which shows clearly the finger of destiny was, that the revolution had already extended its empire so far, that it watched, implacable and invisible, even in the apartments of the Count d'Artois and in the alcoves of the queen. There was not a step which was not denounced, not a word which was not transmitted to the vigilant hatred without. The servants of the royal family unsealed the letters which were intrusted to them,§ copied their contents and sent the copy either to the cabal of Montrouge or to the Breton Club. Thus the plots of the nobility were discovered at once. It was known that the court was disposed to re-seize on despotism, dissolve the States General, crush Paris; that the queen was the soul of this plan of the campaign; that the princes were labouring in concert with her;|| that Louis the Sixteenth was annulled; that foreign troops were arriving by forced marches, and that to meet the required expenses an order had been given to make an hundred millions of bills of the state; that a list had been drawn up which devoted to death not only the Duke of Orleans and the leaders of the ultra revolutionary party, but even those who thought to group themselves around Louis the Sixteenth, become a constitutional monarch, for

* Mémoires de Bailly, t. 1. p. 228.

† Réponse de M. . . . à son ami, quoted in the *Histoire Parlementaire*, t. 2. Livraison, 3. p. 74.

‡ Hist. Parlementaire. t. 2. Livraison, 3. p. 74.

§ Beaulieu, *Essais historiques*, t. 1. p. 302.

|| See concerning this the notice of M. de Barante, made with the papers of M. de Saint-Priest himself, who was then a minister.

example, Mirabeau, Mounier and Lally Tollendal.* Facts soon spoke. On the 6th of July the royal German regiment, commanded by the Prince de Lambesc, encamped in the garden of the Hunting lodge;† eight cannons were placed at Sèvres, where passers by were received during the night as enemies;‡ a regiment of Hussars had made their appearance at Versailles, who, odious to the French guards, odious to the people, rendered the city which was agitated by their quarrels bloody;§ it was said that thirty-five thousand men were already spread out between Paris and Versailles, that twenty thousand more were expected, that trains of artillery were to follow; the roads began to be interrupted; the roads, bridges, promenades were changed in succession into military posts;|| every where was the image and as it were the spectre of invasion.

The conduct of the National Assembly in this extremity of danger deserves to be remarked. Trembling at having submitted itself to the people as its defenders, and wishing to owe nothing but to the king, it held out its hands towards Louis the Sixteenth, implored him, and did not fear to descend in its prayer even to the language of idolatry. Mirabeau was overwhelmed with applause when in the session of the 8th of July, he said, "Have the councillors foreseen the consequences of those measures they are taking for the security of the throne? . . . Have they observed by what a fatal chain of circumstances the wisest minds are cast beyond the limits of moderation, by what terrible impulse an excited people precipitates itself towards excesses, the first idea of which would have made it tremble? Have they read in the heart of our good king?" . . . Mirabeau proposed a petition to Louis the Sixteenth; he was commissioned to draw it up, and the next day he presented an address to the vote of the assembly which made the representatives of the nation speak as follows:—

"The movements of your heart, Sire, are the true safety of Frenchmen. When troops are advancing from all quarters, camps are forming around us and the capital is invested, we ask ourselves with astonishment, is the king distrustful of the fidelity of his people? If he had doubted, would he not have poured his paternal griefs into our heart? What does this threatening display mean to say? Where are the enemies of the state and of the king who are to be subdued? Where are the rebels, the leaguers, who are to be reduced? An unanimous voice replies in the capital; *we cherish our king; we bless heaven for the gift it has given us in his love.* . . . Sire, we conjure you in the name of the country, in the name of your own happiness and glory, to send away your soldiers to the posts from whence your councillors have drawn them. . . . Sire, in the midst of your children be guarded by their love."¶

* "These particulars," says the Abbé de Montgaillard, "came from the Baron de Bretenil," t. 2. p. 62.

† Hist. Parlementaire, t. 2. Livraison, 3. p. 69.

‡ Lettre de M . . . à son ami, quoted in the Hist. Parlementaire, t. 2. Livraison, 3. p. 71.

§ Beaulieu, *Essais historiques*, t. 1. p. 293.

|| Dix-huitième lettre du Comte de Mirabeau à ses commettants.

¶ Ibid.

Never assuredly had the humility of monarchical enthusiasm encountered such forms; but they hoped thus to gain Louis the Sixteenth, and separate his cause from that of the nobles. The adulations of Mirabeau were then voted with transport, "the assembly appearing to have but one soul and one thought."*

Vain calculation; the invincible genius of the revolution called the people upon the scene. Louis the Sixteenth made a dry and harsh reply enveloping a threat, to the deputation which the assembly sent him. He declared that one of his duties was to watch over the preservation of order; that evil intentioned persons could alone misguide his people as to the true motives of the measures of precaution which had been adopted. He proposed, moreover, to the States General to remove to Noyon or Soissons, adding that in that case he would go to Compiègne, in order to maintain the communication that must exist between him and the assembly.†

Thus royalty repulsed with a haughtiness as mad as insulting, that alliance which burgherism was burning to conclude with it, for the double purpose of conquering the aristocracy definitely, and of escaping from the support of the people. So well could the queen and princes blind Louis the Sixteenth.

Though penetrated with bitterness, the assembly dared neither to resist, protest, nor complain, and the Count de Crillon could say without exciting murmurs, that they should trust to the promise of the king, who was an honest man. But Mirabeau, who had been irritated by the ill success of his flatteries, spoke impetuously, and passing suddenly from the language of the evening before to the contrary, combatted the monarchical tendencies of the Count de Crillon. This confidence, on which he prided himself as a virtue, was pure temerity. It was a vice of the nation, which had pushed it from fault to fault at the crisis of the moment. It was time to understand, to open their eyes, if they did not wish "to resemble children who were always mutinous and always slaves."‡

It was time to open their eyes indeed, for the court was pursuing its preparations for war with insolent parade. Two men came to direct them; the Baron de Breteuil and the old Marshal de Broglie. The first, a presumptuous person, of austere countenance, of brutal habits, capable of carrying his zeal to madness, was the statesman of the enterprise;§ the second was its warrior; and neither of them took any pains to conceal their plans. If we must burn Paris, said the Baron de Breteuil, we will burn Paris.|| The Marshal de Broglie wrote to the Prince of Condé;¶ "A salvo of cannon, a discharge of musquetry would soon have dispersed these arguers, and the replaced absolute power which is decaying, in place of the republican spirit which is growing." This mar-

* The phrase of Mirabeau in his account of the session of the 9th of July, *Treizième lettre*.

† *Dix-neuvième lettre du Comte de Mirabeau à des commettants.*

‡ *Ibid.*

§ *Notice sur M. le Comte de Saint Priest*, p. 102.

|| "I repeat this phrase word for word as I heard the Baron de Breteuil say it in 1794." *Mont-gaillard*, t. 2. p. 63.

¶ A letter published in Paris and London in 1789, and which has never been denied.

shal was far from having the capacity of his brother, the mysterious diplomatist, the concealed correspondent of Louis the Fifteenth; he was said to be besides childishly superstitious, and it was rumored among the people that he wore on his finger a little Saint John Népomucène, to whom he repeated all his actions.* But he was a resolute soldier, ready to strike; he suited the court. Strange and for ever odious sight! A vast field of battle extended around this capital of the world of intellect, Paris. Here were the regiments of Provence, Vintimille, Royal Cravate, Helmstadt, Royal Pologne; in another place those of Salis-Samade, Chateau-Vieux, Diesbach, Berchiny, Esterhazy. Who would believe it? They wished to place a cannon in a garden adjoining the hall of the states; a sacrilegious plan, which the fear of being betrayed by the proprietor before the execution alone caused them to abandon.†

And as if menace had not been enough, insult was joined to it. Pamphlets appeared announcing the hopes of the court in terms of outrageous gaiety. In one of those having the form of the Litany was read; "D'Artois, hear us; queen of the French, do not abandon your husband; Barnave, hang yourself; Lafayette, show yourself; de Caylus, go on; Duke of Orleans, tremble; clergy, unite; nobles, avenge yourselves; of our enemies, the Neckers, the Mirabeaus, the Targets, the Chapeliers, the *archbishop of Bourdeaux*, the monsters of the assembly, deliver us, our king! . . . "‡

We are approaching the 10th of July, and every thing was ready for the civil war, not only at Versailles and in Paris, but also in the provinces. As they expected revolt, every commandant received orders to go to his post. Four companies of grenadiers and chasseurs entered Caen in which the multitude were beginning to move. Dumouriez went there and was at the house of the Duke de Beuvron, the commandant of the province, when in the presence of more than sixty nobles, whose countenances were all radiant with triumph, the dutchess went straight up to him. "Well, Dumouriez, do you know the great news? Your friend Necker is driven off; the king remounts the throne, the assembly is overthrown; your friends the forty-seven§ are perhaps now in the Bastille with Mirabeau, Target and a hundred of those insolents of the third estate; and the Marshal de Broglie is surely in Paris with thirty thousand men." "So much the worse, Madame,"|| coldly replied Dumouriez.

What was the national assembly doing during this time. It was listening to a report of the committee on the constitution, presented by Mounier, and a project of a declaration of the rights of man, presented by Lafayette. Fortunately, Paris was awake, and the bolder members of the Breton club did not sleep. One of them, Adrian Duport,¶ having conceived the idea of arming France by means of a panic terror, emissaries were despatched every where, commissioned to cry out when traversing

* Annales Parisiennes, No. 1. p. 11.

† Beaulieu, a royalist writer, relates this fact as of his personal knowledge. He was at this period at Versailles. See Essais historiques, t. 1. p. 308.

‡ Litanies des Saints contre les diables.

§ The forty-seven nobles who, on the 25th of June, united with the third estate.

* Mémoires de Dumouriez, t. 2. p. 35. Collection Berville et Barrière.

¶ Beaulieu, Essais historiques, t. 1. p. 306.

cities and villages, "The brigands are about." The stratagem was entirely successful; every man seized his gun, all France was erect.

In their turn, the Orleanists had surrounded the Duke of Orleans, urging him to become at length the chief of his army, representing to him his very dangers as a kind of providential indication of his part, as a proof that he would soon have to choose between seizing on the scaffold and dying on it. They went further; they knew that like in that to his grandfather the regent, he believed in magic and had recourse to it. A man of extraordinary appearance, one of those mystic revolutionists whose trace we have followed, presents himself to the prince, and offers to furnish him with an exact knowledge of futurity, by placing him in connection with infernal spirits.* "Will you have the courage," said the mysterious person to him, "to accompany me, alone, at midnight, to a plain without roads, like that of Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, for example?" The duke consented to it, and leaving his train at Villeneuve, he goes with his guide. The night was dark. They meet spectres, and conquering his alarm the prince interrogates them. They do not fail to make predictions to him of a nature to exalt his heart, and he received a ring, which was, so long as he kept it, to render fortune propitious to him. Such were the means they did not hesitate to bring to play, who wished, at all hazards, to act upon the Duke of Orleans, to give him a crown to desire. But this prince had early so exhausted the springs of life in him, that he had reached that kind of disinterestedness which is only indifference. Royalty did not appear to him to be of sufficient value for him to condemn himself, to the efforts of ambition and the fatigue of hypocrisy to conquer it.

The situation thus tended to simplify itself in a terrible manner. Since burgherism was led to resort to the seditious auxiliaries whom Mirabeau had dreaded; since Louis the Sixteenth was disappearing behind the Count d'Artois; since the Duke of Orleans was blotting himself out, the bloody part could only lay between the court and the people.

Paris was muttering, and in excitement. A thousand alarming rumors, a thousand mixed recitals of truth and falsehood, urged the population from uncertainty to anger; one while it was, that the king, flying from Versailles, was about to establish himself in the plain of the Sablons, and place his throne beneath a tent, in the midst of a camp; now it was an army of murderers whom they had called from the depths of Italy; or still better, they were preparing to take from the people the last morsels of that poisoned bread which the famine had left them.† The smallest particulars, the least news increased the agitation. A duel between French guards and Hussars, the coachman of M. de Coigny, struck with the flat side of the sword, for not having drawn up before the prince de Lambesc . . . were events.‡ The fermentation was so great, the passions were so excited, that a popular orator fell dead with excitement.§ A spy having been discovered in the Palais Royal, they cut off his hair, plunge him several times into the water, and drag him bleeding through the

* *Mémoires historiques et politiques*, t. 6. p. 64.

† Lettre à M. le Marquis de Luchet.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid.

streets,* whilst in other quarters the people cried out, "Three men were hung, because they killed a guard of the king's pleasures." Every where were noise and the piercing voices of chance speakers, every where the movements of the crowd. In the Tuilleries, two officers of the regiment of Berchiny were stopped, and with daggers at their breast compelled to shout "Hurrah for the third estate." In the Palais Royal, Messieurs de Polignac and de Sombreuil were forced to open a passage for themselves, sword in hand. Then by the side of these scenes of violence were scenes of tumultuous joy and enthusiasm. In the open streets, amid the applause of a famished multitude, preparations were made to fête the insurrection, to give it banquets. A sumptuous dinner was offered in the gardens of the Duke of Orleans, to some artillerists who had openly violated their countersign, and eighty soldiers of the regiments of Provence and Vintimille, having revolted, a patriotic ball was given to them in the Champs-Élysées by the dames of the market.†

Behold then Paris abandoned to its ardors. It is true that the cavalry of the Marshal de Broglie cover the plain of Grenelle, that his heavy artillery occupy Saint-Denis,‡ that Besenval is in the Champ de Mars with his German troops, and that from the top of the Bastille loaded cannon command control the faubourg Saint-Antoine; but menaces are suddenly clothed with appearances of fear. There was no attempt at repression; in the places where the crowd was boiling over, there was no figure of a pretorian. Authority is silent; it conceals itself in the centre of motionless bayonets, and that monarchy which yesterday armed itself so noisily, we might to-day think to be dead in its armor.

There was the same external calmness at Versailles. The world was ignorant of what was passing in the chateau. On the 10th of July, as Necker presented himself at the door of the council chamber, the Count d'Artois met him, and shaking his fist at him, said, "Go where you came from, traitorous foreigner! Return to your little city, lest you perish by my hand." Necker took a step backwards, drew himself up, and not answering a word, went to take his place at the council.§ On the next day, at the council of despatches, the ministers remarked the traces of an unusual emotion on the face of Louis the Sixteenth. He soon dropped his head, closed his eyes, and appeared to go to sleep.|| But it was one of the ordinary ruses of this weak prince to feign drowsiness, when he wished to hide his secret anxieties or the embarrassments of his conscience, in the presence of his council. This was known, and such of the ministers as followed the fortunes of Necker were alarmed by his false sleep.

* Le Cousin Jacques, Hist. de France pendant trois mois, p. 22.

† Lettre à le Marquis de Luchet.

‡ Mémoires de Dumouriez, t. 2. p. 37.

§ Mémoires de Ferrières, a royalist writer, and hostile to Necker.

|| Lettres et instructions de Louis 18. Notice sur M. le Comte de Saint-Priest.

CHAPTER X.

PARIS IN INSURRECTION.

General anxiety—The dismissal of Necker—Picture of Parisian insurrection—The Abbé Gregoire—The declaration of the National Assembly—Heroism of the people; their disinterestedness; the distrusts which calumniate them—Strange dictatorship born from events.—Why the Bourgeois guard is established—Artificial manoeuvres of the provost of the merchants—Characteristic letter of the Baron de Besenval to the Countess Jules—The people are deceived; their indignation—Distribution of powder at the Hotel de Ville—Night of the 13th of July.

On Sunday, the 12th of July, 1789, Paris heard a movement of the Duke of Orleans proclaimed early in the morning, which, under the name of an *honorary tax*, proposed a voluntary subscription to comfort the poor. The Duke of Orleans was at the head of the list; he gave three hundred thousand livres.*

But on that same day other thoughts occupied the minds of men. The poor even appeared to be indifferent to their misery. "Has Necker been dismissed?" was the question which bourgeois, soldiers, workmen, and even the unfortunate beggars, who, having no asylum, sought a country, addressed to each other as they met. "Has Necker been dismissed," and the number of a journal† passed from hand to hand, in which was read, under date of the preceding evening, and written at midnight; "In general every thing appeared to be tranquil; this tranquillity gave me hopes. I entered the galleries of the Chateau. Ah, sirs, you will believe that it was not to learn the confirmation of news, which alarmed me, but rather to learn there that it was false. It appeared to me, that there were some movements about the apartments of Madame * * *. I saw almost immediately the Duke of * * * leave them, M. de * * * and the Duke of * * * had entered them some minutes before. I thought I saw a change about their faces. It was late; I determined to retire. As I was passing through the court yard of the ministers, couriers ready to start increased my anxiety. My way to the *Croix-Blanche* led me past the hotel of M. Necker. A carriage which, I thought, was his was at the door; post horses were attached to it. I questioned one of the people, trembling: 'Madame Necker,' he said to me, 'is about to join M. Necker at Ouen.' The security of this man restored tranquillity to my heart, and I hope on awakening to learn only good news."

What would this news be? Whilst awaiting them, the people abandoned themselves to gloomy conjectures, and exchanged a thousand bitter remarks. They complained of the queen, who was accused of having sent several millions to the emperor;‡ of the Count d'Artois who was suspected of a criminal audacity; of the Marshal de Broglie, who had dared to say, "I answer for Paris."§ About nine o'clock, men,

* Lettre à M. le Marquis de Luchet.

† Le Courier de Versailles à Paris, No. 8.

‡ Lettre à M. le Marquis de Luchet.

§ Annales Parisiennes, No. 4, p. 15.

with dejected and alarmed countenances might have been remarked in different places. They spoke to each other in a low voice, mysteriously.* There was no more doubt. The horn of disaster was about to sound, the streets were filled with cavalry and infantry, and the pavement groaned beneath the trains of artillery. There was then an universal excitement among the multitude, and it flowed from all quarters in swelling floods towards the Palais Royal, already designated as the head-quarters of future revolts.

The Palais Royal did not present at that period the appearance it now does. The Duke of Orleans had, about 1788, constructed in the middle of the garden an enclosure clothed with a trellis, and which a terrace with flowers and jets of water crowned. The apartments of the prince were reached from it by a small open gallery, and the lower apartments of the palace by a subterranean gallery, traces of which still remain.† This enclosure, which from a distance resembled a vast basket adorned with flowers, had been first intended as a theatre for exercises in horsemanship, and had received the name of the circus, it had been then opened for dances and concerts. At one of its extremities was a basin flanked by four pavilions. All around extended smiling alleys, which galleries framed. In this fresh and voluptuous sojourn the insurrection encamped of preference; and this strange forum became so formidable to the enemies of the revolution, that one of them painted it in these terms: "It is the image of the chimera, and has the head of a beautiful prostitute, the tongue of a serpent, the hands of a harpy; its eyes emit flames, its heart is empty, or ferments only with lascivious thoughts, its mouth distils now venom, now heroic words."‡

Thither, then, went all Paris of the revolution on the 12th of July, 1789. The crowd was so great that many were obliged to climb into the branches of the trees, and remain suspended there.§ They as yet only waited; but that groaning of restless crowds, so resembling the sea, was already rising to heaven. Between eleven o'clock and noon, a messenger who arrived from Versailles, proclaimed the terrible news. All were prepared for it, and yet it cast such darkness over the situation that the first movement was that of furious incredulity. The bearer of the news was seized, and dragged to the very basin of the circus; he ran the risk of being thrown into it. But details which could not be gainsaid, spread the conviction that they endeavored in vain to repulse.||

Necker had received, on the preceding evening, the royal letter which announced his dismissal and exile. He was at table at the time. He read the letter with an unmoved countenance, continued to converse freely with his guests, and at the close of dinner, pretending a pain in his head, he invited his wife to take a turn with him. They immediately got into a carriage and entered Brussels, whilst the Baroness de Staël was still ignorant of the fall and flight of her father,|| so careful was the disgraced minister not to become an occasion of trouble. Lafayette

* L'Ami du Roi, etc., chap. 40. p. 53. † Vatout, Hist. du Palais Royal, p. 185.

‡ Rétif de la Bretonne, La Semaine Nocturne, the fifth night, p. 91.

§ L'Ami du Roi, etc., chap. 40. p. 53.

|| Hist. de la Révolution par deux amis de la liberté, t. 1. chap. 15. p. 311.

had said to him, "If they dismiss you, thirty thousand Parisians will conduct you back to Versailles."*

There are moments in history in which a man is a situation. The dismissal of Necker once confirmed, the Palais Royal assumed a formidable appearance. During the whole morning the day had remained obscured,† but now the sky cleared off, and the sun shone upon the thousands of heads that it embraced. Having reached the middle of his course, he darted his rays upon the burning-glass placed in the meridian of the Palais Royal; the light of a cannon received them, it went off at once;‡ it was the sun himself which appeared to give the signal of the revolution, and in the excitement of a kind of sublime superstition, the people uttered a loud cry.

Then a young man springs from the Café de Foy, mounts a chair, and holding a pistol in one hand and a sword in the other, cries out, "To arms." Snatching a leaf from a tree, he makes a cockade of it for himself. The trees are despoiled in the twinkling of an eye. They urge on. The young tribune is called for history Camille Desmoulins; to the majority of those who follow him in the tumult, he was still but a courageous stranger.

The flux and reflux of the multitude at the Palais Royal; the streets, now full of men who were hastening by in troops and silently, and now deserted; the shops hastily closed; the women with vast baskets full of green ribbons, which they distributed to passers by; distant firing; at all the windows, faces on which a tragical curiosity was painted; such was Paris. At four in the afternoon, an immense crowd presented itself at the house of the sculptor, Guillaume Curtius, on the boulevard du Temple,§ demanding the busts of the Duke of Orleans and Necker. The busts having been given up, the terrible cortege passed along the boulevard in an order of march at once triumphant and dismal. It was not composed solely of the populace; all conditions were confounded in it. By the side of a Savoyard, who with a black cap on his head,|| carried the effigy of the Duke of Orleans, that of Necker was borne by an elegant young man, having two watches, and clothed in a dress of striped silk.¶ Flags floated in sign of victory, but also of distress and mourning;*** and on the way they cried out, "No more joy, close the theatres."†† The column went towards the Palais Royal and directed its way by the Rue Richelieu, towards the place Louis the Fifteenth. Cavalry were posted at the place Vendome. The young man in the silk dress was shot here; he fell dead.‡‡ But the bust was immediately raised up, and mingling with the troops which had received orders to fall back, the procession arrived with them at the entrance of the place Louis the Fif-

* Mémoires de Général Lafayette, published by his family, t. 4. p. 58.

† Lettre à M. le Marquis de Luchet. ‡ L'Ami du Roi, etc., chap. 40. p. 53.

§ Deposition de Guillaume Curtius dans la procédure criminelle instituée au Châtelet de Paris; 95, p. 150. chez Baudouin, 1790.

|| Ibid.

¶ Deposition de François Pépin, ubi supra, 124. p. 185.

*** Le Cousin Jacques, p. 24.

†† Ibid.

‡‡ The fact of a French guardsman slain, and that of the bust of Necker broken by a sabre blow, are incorrect. See the depositions of Curtius and the Savoyard cited above. The two busts were returned to Curtius unhurt.

teenth. There, in the midst of a frightful disorder, the Savoyard was struck by a shot in the left leg, and by a sabre cut in the breast. He is surrounded; one of his companions raises him upon his shoulders, extricates himself from the *melée*, and carries him to the Palais Royal, where he remained exposed all bleeding in the sight of the people.

Besenal was, however, in the place Louis the Fifteenth, with a strong detachment of the Swiss guard, the hussars of Berchiny, the dragoons of Choiseul, the regiment of Salis-Samadé, and the crowd was thickening around the soldiers. Besenal appeared at first to be immovable; but soon seized with a fierce impatience, he determines to employ force, and instead of arranging his forces so that the different groups could flow by, through the *champs Elysées* and the avenues on the right which lead to the quay, or by the large outlets which open on the left on the Rue Saint Honoré, he adopts a *manœuvre** whose inevitable effect would be to crowd thousands of men upon a single point, and constrain them to fly towards the garden of the Thuilleries, by the narrow passage of the Pont Tournant. Such an evolution was so extraordinary, it presaged such frightful evils, that the Prince de Lambesc, whom he ordered to push right on the Thuilleries, made him repeat his order twice.† Forced to obey, he advances at the head of his German dragoons, driving the multitude before him. An old man was trampled under foot by the horses; mothers were overthrown, dragging their children after them; the air resounded with lamentable groans. The dragoons traverse the Pont Tournant, overthrow a barricade formed hastily, cross it, and arrive in the garden of the Thuilleries at the Statue of Mercury. There, seized with doubt, in the midst of their violence, the officers raised their caps.‡ But the confusion was extreme, and whilst pushing one another, inoffensive promenaders fled full of fear, some indignant young men hurled stones, chairs, broken bottles from the tops of the terraces, on the dragoons. The cry is suddenly heard, "Turn the bridge, turn the bridge," and fearful lest their retreat should be cut off, the cavalry wheel, firing their pistols. The Prince [de Lambesc hastens furiously to a group of men who were preparing to turn the bridge, and strikes one of them with his sabre. The order was then given to post themselves at the store-room of the crown, and the troops which covered the place Louis the Fifteenth remained in their sinister immobility.

The brutal expedition was immediately known through all Paris; but as usual, it was exaggerated. It was affirmed that the dragoons had fired on persons passing by; the Prince de Lambesc was represented as murdering an old man who had fallen on his knees and asked for quarter;§ it was affirmed that they were about to set fire to the capital. A cannon shot fired in the meanwhile,|| added to the alarm and rage. Clusters of people were formed in all the quarters of the city; the shops of the armorers are pillaged; but they take neither gold nor silver, they want iron only.¶ It was nine o'clock at night when the fusileers of the com-

* It is a royalist writer, Montjoie, who makes the remark. See *L'Ami du Roi*, etc., chap. 40. p. 56.

† *L'Ami du Roi*, chap. 40. p. 56.

‡ *Le Cousin Jacques*, p. 27.

§ *Ibid.*

|| Beaulieu, *Essais Historiques*, t. 1. p. 311.

¶ Dusanx, *Œuvre de Sept. jours*, p. 274. Collection Berville et Barrière.

pany of Vaugirard, with a corporal named Garde and a drum at their head, attacked a detachment of the Royal Germans, at the Hotel de Montmorency. A French guardsman springs at the bridle of a dragoon, evades a blow of the sabre, and with a blow of the bayonet stretches the hostile horseman on the ground.* The foreign soldiers demanded to maintain the fight; their leaders order a retreat. At the same time, the French guards who were in the barracks of the Rue Verte saw a man appear among them, of rough exterior, a red and pimply skin and hideous features, but who, fierce and never speaking of himself but in the third person,† exercised the double empire of pride and daring. It was Gonchou, the Mirabeau of the faubourgs. The guards, excited by him, left their barracks quickly and marched to the place Louis the Fifteenth to combat the foreign troops. But it was vacant when they reached it.

The attitude of authority was every where that of stupor before Paris thus unchained. At the hotel of the Invalides, was M. de Sombreuil, who hearing a heavy cart load of stones tilted out, and thinking he heard cannon, sent a despatch to the ministry to know how he should resist imaginary artillery;‡ at the other extremity of Paris was M. de Launey, who perceiving from the top of the Bastille, that the population of the faubourg Saint Antoine was violently excited, sent a courier to Versailles to state that he would take nothing on himself;§ and finally, there was Besenval, who, passing from the excess of rashness to the contrary, withdrew his troops from the place Louis the Fifteenth, and left the capital to itself.||

In this extremity, learning that an immense multitude which was seeking for arms had invaded the great saloon of the Hotel de Ville, some electors repaired there, in hopes of calming their minds.¶ In the evening, when the deputy Guillotin came to announce at the Hotel de Ville, that all was quiet at Versailles, and that there was nothing more to fear, an elector named de Leutre, exclaimed impetuously, "you remember, Messieurs, that on the 13th of July, 1788, a frightful hail storm devastated half of France; if you are not careful, the 13th of July, 1789, will be a thousand times more disastrous than the 13th of July, 1788 was."** Would this melancholy prophecy be fulfilled? Behold what the representatives of burgherism required. The effervescence, however, increased momentarily in the great hall of the Hotel de Ville. The barrier which separated the electors from the crowd of citizens was crossed. "Arms; we want arms." The electors ordered the porter to give up those which could be found. But the people do not wait. The depot of arms of the city guard is discovered; the doors fall before a powerful effort; every one arms himself and an unknown man mounts guard at the door of the great hall, in his shirt, with naked legs, without shoes, and a gun on his shoulder.††

* Le Cousin Jacques, p. 30. L'Ami du Roi, etc., chap. 40, p. 62.

† Les prisons en 1793, par Madame la Comtesse de Bohm, p. 169.

‡ L'Ami du Roi, etc., chap. 40. p. 60.

§ Mémoires de Besenval, t. 2. p. 363.

¶ Procès-verbal de l'assemblée des Electeurs du tiers Etat, t. 1. p. 175, Paris, Chez Baudouin, 1790.

** Annales Parisiennes, No. 1. p. 14.

†† Procès-verbal de l'assemblée, etc., t. 1. p. 180.

§ Ibid.

The night was terrible. Money was exacted to procure powder; people were stopped in the street to be asked "do you belong to the third estate?"* In certain quarters groups were seen reading, by the light of torches, many placards, whose very gaiety was menacing; "The post of grand master of ceremonies for sale; address Madame de Brézé," or still better, "The Duke de Bourbon, having been carried by his passion for the chase to the pursuit of a stag, indemnities are promised to persons, whose possessions have been damaged." The barriers were burned. In proportion as the darkness thickened, did the increasing noise appear to increase the alarm. Towards midnight, they commenced sounding the tocsin at the Hotel de Ville, Notre Dame, and in all the parishes; every one barricaded his own house, and during this night, sleep descended only on the eyes of children.†

At Versailles, the 12th of July had flown by in silent anxiety. Communication with the capital having been stopped, neither the post, nor persons on foot, had been enabled to cross the barriers, Mirabeau was led to say, addressing himself to Louis the Sixteenth, "Unfortunate king, in the bosom of a people who cherish you, never forget this day of anguish. It is thus tyrants live."‡ The deputies had assembled early in the morning; but not being in numbers, the national assembly had adjourned its resolutions until the next day, repeating the famous verse of Horace: "*Si fractus illabatur orbis*," which the Abbé Gregoire recalled on this occasion.

The Abbé Gregoire was then beginning to draw attention to himself. He was a man in whom two entirely different natures were harmoniously combined. Thus bold in his reason as a philosopher, as simple hearted as the humblest of village pastors, he had learned from reading profane authors contempt for prejudices, from that of the gospel, love for the poor. He was a Jansenist, but without its being easy to know if he partook most of Fenelon or Saint Cyran. It arose from this, that this priest, so rude to terrestrial powers, and who had frequently inspirations worthy of the inflexible genius of Antoine Arnauld, devoted his life, however, to the defence of the Jews, the negroes, the common people, all the condemned here below. He bore in his person visible signs of these internal contrasts; for he had at once a severe countenance and insinuating manners, a bold eye, and a smile full of sweetness.

The national assembly commenced its session on the 13th of July, at nine o'clock in the morning. The events of Paris were not yet known; but they had learned that Messieurs La Luzerne, Saint-Priest and Montmorin had received orders to leave the court, and that the new ministers were, the Baron de Breteuil, the Marshal de Broglie, Messieurs de la Galaizière, La Porte, Foulon. Such names spoke clearly the designs of the court; the consternation was general. Mounier having proposed that a deputation should be sent to the king, to request the recall of the ministers, and to declare to him that the country could have

* Lettre à M. le Marquis de Luchet.

† Beaulieu, t. 1. p. 514. Lettre au Marquis de Luchet. Hist. de la Revolution, par deux amis de la liberté, t. 1. chap. 15. L'Ami du Roi, etc., chap. 41.

‡ Dix-neuvième lettre du Comte de Mirabeau à ses commentants.

no confidence in their successors, Lally Tollendal rose, and with accents of sadness, said :

"Let us refer back to last August. The laws were overthrown; twenty-five millions of men were without judges, and without justice, the public treasury was without resources . . . the people had no hope, but in the States General, famine showed itself afar. The truth struck the ear of the king, and he recalled the faithful minister, who, in more prosperous times, had given him proofs of his devotion. Justice immediately resumes its course; the public treasury fills up, the infamous word bankruptcy is no longer pronounced, the prisons are opened, and the unfortunate whom they contain set at liberty. . . . The States General have been announced, and no one longer doubts, when a virtuous minister guaranteed their being held, and the name of the king received a thousand blessings. Famine has been announced; but the seas are soon covered with vessels, two worlds are placed under contribution for our subsistence, more than fourteen hundred thousand quintals of meal and grain are imported among us. Finally, in despite of obstacles and intrigues, the States General are opened. . . . The States General are opened. How much there is in these words. . . . Each day has seen unions and the principles of the constitution coming to light. We have marched onward; France has breathed. It is at such a moment that perverse counsels take from the king a faithful servant, from the nation a virtuous minister. This is not enough; three other ministers whose virtues merit our esteem, are also taken from us. This is still not enough; M. Necker is exiled, banished, condemned to fly as a culprit. But who is his accuser? Is it the parliaments whom he has recalled; the people whom he has fed; the creditors whom he has paid? In default of accusers, I seek for calumniators. . . . I have heard him called factious; has his retreat been that of a factious person? . . . He has escaped from the public grief. The whole night was passed in alarm, in seeking for him. He preferred to deprive himself of all consolation, rather than occasion trouble by his retreat, and his last feeling has been for the happiness of France. If these are not characteristics sacred to virtue, it is impossible to believe in virtue."*

These words are received with applause mingled with tears. In the midst of the universal emotion, the Count de Virieu, a deputy of the nobility, proposes that they should renew in common the oath of the tennis court. "Oaths are eternal," replies Clermont de Tonnerre, "it is useless to renew them; the constitution will be, or we will be no longer." What however would they meet at the end of their ardent career, whither would they be drawn? What would the people do? The words, *establishment of a bourgeois militia*, having been pronounced, M. de Saint Fargeau exclaimed, "When no one represents the people, it represents itself."† At this moment a courier from the commandant of Paris is introduced, and hands the following letter to the president. "The crowd

* Speech of Lally Tollendal, reported almost entire in the *Dix-neuvième lettre de Mirabeau à ses commettants*.—See also the *Moniteur*, in which this speech is still more complete.

† See *l'Ami du Roi*, etc. in which in the speech of Lally Tollendal is treated as a romantic harangue, 3e cahier, chap. 42. p. 95.

‡ *Moniteur*, Session of 13th of July, 1789.

is immense in the Palais Royal . . . the barriers on the north have been sacked; that of the throne is on fire. Every one is taking the green cockade. . . . It is said that the prisons are to be opened. They are badly informed at Versailles; they wish to punish the bandits, and keep them in prison.* This news, its laconic sadness, the very disorder in which it was drawn up, filled the assembly with fright. It remains for some time mute with horror; but energy gradually awakening, a deputation was sent to the king.

A great movement reigned in the Chateau, a movement of joy and pride not of alarm.† The insurrection in Paris was painted in the imagination of the courtiers, but as an outbreak of the populace, which it would be easy to quell. The Baron de Breteuil "who had a deep-toned voice, and who made a great noise as he walked, striking with his foot, as if he wished to make an army spring from the earth,"‡ had never displayed more presumptuous confidence. Louis the Sixteenth was deceived by it. He received the deputation as a man, who thought himself the master, and replied; "I have already informed you of my intentions as to the measures which the disorders of Paris have forced me to take; it is for me alone to judge of their necessity, and I cannot make any change in them."

It was then that the National Assembly indignant, but calm, and rising to the majesty of the Roman senate, threatened by the vicinity of a hostile camp, made that celebrated decree:

"The Assembly, the interpreter of the nation, declares, that M. Necker and the other ministers, who have been removed, carry with them their esteem and regret;

"It declares that alarmed at the fatal consequences which may ensue from the reply of the king, it will not cease to insist upon the removal of the troops, who have been extraordinarily collected near to Paris and Versailles, and upon the establishment of bourgeois guards;

"It declares anew, that there can be no intermediary between the king and the national assembly;

"It declares that the ministers, and civil and military agents of authority are responsible for every enterprise, contrary to the rights of the nation, and to the decrees of this assembly;

"It declares that the ministers and actual counsellors of his majesty, of whatsoever rank or station they may be, or whatsoever functions they may discharge, are personally responsible for the present evils, and for those which may follow;

"It declares that the public debt having been placed under the guardianship of French loyalty, and the nation not refusing to pay the interest on it, no power has the right to pronounce the infamous word bankruptcy, no power has the right to violate the public faith."

Whilst the representatives of burgherism were so nobly resisting the court at Versailles, at Paris they were placing themselves in a defensive attitude against the people, calumniated by their suspicions.

* *Moniteur*, Session of 13th of July, 1789.

† *L'Ami du Roi*, etc. 3e cahier, chap. 42. p. 79.

‡ *Madame de Staël*, *Considerations*, &c. t. 1. chap. 20. p. 12.

Several of the electors went to the Hotel de Ville, at 8 o'clock, on the morning of the 13th, and to impose on the multitude, who were already filling its halls, announced falsely the existence of a bourgeois soldiery.* To form this soldiery, and by it to weigh upon the people, became the great occupation of the electors. Alarmed by the noise of the tocsin, which all the echoes of the city sent to them, and by the cry of *to arms* which came from every mouth, they sent in haste for M. de Flesselles, the provost of the merchants and echevins. An innumerable crowd pressed around the Hotel de Ville, which applauded at the sight of M. de Flesselles, who arrived with a confident air. They did not know that decisive measures against them were then meditating, and that it was to give a varnish of legality to these measures, that the provost of the merchants had been sent for. In fact he had no sooner entered the great hall of the Hotel de Ville than the assembly of electors hastened to offer him the presidency. It was then determined, after a short deliberation, that the citizens who were assembled there, should retire to their respective districts; that a *permanent committee* should be appointed; that each district—they were sixty in number—should be called upon to furnish two hundred men for the formation of a Parisian militia; that the right of watching over the public safety, and of providing for the organization of the soldiery, should belong to the *permanent committee*; that every private citizen should be furnished with a sabre, a gun, a sword and a pistol which he should be bound to carry to his district, that the riotous assemblages should cease.† The members of the *permanent committee* were chosen without further delay, but solely from among the echevins and electors. The usurpation was flagrant: a citizen, named Grélé, denounced it fiercely, and to quiet his opposition, they added him at once to the committee.‡

Thus burgherism gave itself a pretorian guard of twelve thousand men. At the risk of subjecting the court, it wished to disarm the people.

And yet nothing could be more admirable than the conduct of this people, the object of so much distrust. It was its honor which guarded the city. Whilst above it, they were deliberating on the means of reducing it to impotence, it was distributing itself spontaneously in protective groups, laying itself out to prevent its anger from dishonoring a vigilant, sometimes a cruel care. In the garden of the abbé of Montmaitre, for example, some workmen hung on a tree one of their companions who had stolen an hen.§ Others took the carriage of the Prince de Lambesc to the place de Grève, to burn it there; but his trunk with all its contents was carried scrupulously to the Hotel de Ville.|| Thus the people avenged themselves for fears which outrage lavished on them.

It was an inspiration of generosity which led them to the prison de la Force. In this Bastille of usury, unfortunate men were languishing,

* Procès-verbal de l'assemblée des électeurs, t. 1. p. 183.

† Ibid. t. 1. p. 187 et suiv.

‡ The procès-verbal de l'assemblée des électeurs, though drawn up with a minute abundance of details, abstains from mentioning this fact.—Dusaulx reports it without commentary.—See l'Œuvre de sept jours, p. 278.

§ Lettre à M. le Marquis de Luchet.

|| Dusaulx, Œuvre de sept jours, p. 982.

several of whom had entered it when young, and had seen their hair turn white,* being guilty of the crime of poverty. . . . Thus the emotion was profound, when they traversed Paris, holding each other by the hand, weeping with joy and blessing their benefactors. This same people who set at liberty the prisoners of la Force, assisted in repressing the revolt of those of the Châtelet,† in order to show clearly that they protected misfortune, not robbery or assassination.

Scenes however of deplorable violence, as is easy to conceive, took place in the convent of the Lazarists. It was said that this convent contained an enormous mass of grain, and that was a formidable denunciation at a time when Paris was suffering so cruelly from famine. The rumor was well founded, but they were ignorant, that the Lazarists distributed abundant alms. Their house was assailed, and the popular fury there displayed itself; it was, however, a disinterested excitement, for money offered to the assailants was rejected with contempt,‡ and fifty-two wagon loads§ of meal were faithfully conducted to the hall, by men who wanted bread.

Paris however appeared to be a prey to a kind of sacred intoxication. People who did not know one another, accosted each other to communicate the ardor of a fraternal delirium. Green cockades were distributed. Every where women cast them out of every window to passers by, and if any one asked them why they adopted green, the color of the Count d'Artois, voices replied, it is the color of hope.|| Women were obliged to give up their ribbons with which the guns were ornamented.¶ Leaders of bands caused the *rappel* to be beat, or for want of drums assembled their robust army to the noise of bells.** The Garde-Meuble having been invaded, and the arms which it contained carried off, casks, lances, and bucklers glittered, borne, as in the time of the league, by warriors in rags. Finally such were the effects, frequently strange, of this glorious disorder, that popular play actors appeared in the pulpits of the churches in which the assemblies were held, and were there applauded in their character of tribunes.††

There was nothing, moreover, which was not given to patriotism, to the enthusiasm of the new ideas. Alarmists went about it is true, saying "The Bourbon palace is on fire; they are about to burn the Bagatelle, in the wood of Boulogne." News which perfidious mouths sowed, for not a fact confirmed it, and it was on a false alarm that the Countess de Brionne, after having had the furniture of her hotel taken away by people in disguise, fled herself in a hackney coach.‡‡ The honor of the people still guarded the city.

But this it was which the bourgeois municipality, impatient to rid itself of so much generous ardor, refused to understand. Without in-

* L'Ami du Roi, etc. 3e cahier, chap. 41, p. 66.

† Ibid. p. 67. Montjoie who relates both facts does not blush to call those of whom he speaks, *brigands*.

‡ An avowal made in a recital full of bitterness of Cousin Jacques, p. 34.

§ Prud'homme, Révolutions de Paris, t. 1. p. 7. 6th edition, 1790.

¶ L'Ami du Roi, etc. 3e cahier, chap. 41, p. 67.

‡ Lettre à M. le Marquis de Luchet.

†† Le Cousin Jacques, p. 43.

** L'Ami du Roi, ubi supra.

‡‡ Lettre à M. le Marquis de Luchet.

quiring if their apprehensions about the people were not a calumny, and if prudence, when it is unjust, is not a danger, the electors, assembled at the hotel de ville in *permanent committee*, made a definite decree, providing,

That the number of Parisian soldiery should be raised from twelve to forty-eight thousand men ;

That the sixty districts, reduced into sixteen quarters, should form sixteen legions ;

That each member of the Parisian soldiery should wear a red and blue cockade ;

That every man who should be found wearing this cockade without having been registered in one of the districts, should be handed over to the justice of the permanent committee.*

The permanent committee had taken care to reserve to itself the appointment of the superior officers, leaving only the inferior to the districts.† The chief command was offered to the Duke d'Aumont who asked for twenty-four hours to think of it, the second post to the Marquis de la Salle, who at once threw his fortune and life into it.‡

This seizure of sovereign power by a handful of electors or obscure *echevins* was a strange blow of audacity.§ To organize an army for the service of the middle classes, to order the people to be licensed, to dispose of high military grades, to impose a cockade on the revolution, to erect itself into a supreme tribunal, was what some bourgeois dared both against the sovereignty of one and the sovereignty of all. But there are in the life of societies, certain stormy hours, in which are events which make dictatorships.

Thus these men whom the agitation importuned, had the skill to present themselves at first as agitators. That was their strength at first. Passionate adhesions were handed into them from all the districts. The students of the Chatôlet, the medical students, the French guards, the commandant of the watch presented themselves successively to the new authority, to salute its installation.|| The people themselves, whom too much independence embarrasses, did homage to the Hotel de Ville, with the two silver cannon given formerly to Louis the Fourteenth, by the king of Siam, and which on the 13th of July were mingled with the baggage of the *émeute*. Carriages stopped at the gates of the capital, cars full of grain, furniture, table furniture, provisions of every kind were directed towards the place de Grève, which had become, according to a cotemporary,|| one of the richest, but the most turbulent and least accessible of the marts of Europe.

* Procès-verbal de l'assemblée des électeurs, t. I. p. 195. et suiv. † Ibid. p. 197.

‡ Dusault, Œuvre de sept jours, p. 28.

§ The following are their names, of which some only have survived ; de Flesselles, the provost of the merchants ; Buffault, Sageret, Vergne, Rouen, Echevins ; Ethis de Corny, king's attorney ; Veytard, chief register ; the Marquis de la Salle, the Abbé Fauchet, Tassin, de Leutre, Quatremère, Dumangin, Girou, Ducloz du Fresnay, Moreau de Saint Méry, Bancaal des Issarts, Hyon, Legrand de Saint René, Jeanin, electors ; Gréle, citizen.

|| Procès-verbal de l'assemblée des électeurs, t. I. p. 204, 231.

† Dusault, Œuvre de sept jours, p. 289.

The faubourgs wanted to be armed, and their impatience was so hot, that fifty thousand pikes were made in thirty-six hours.* But pikes did not answer, they wanted fire-arms. Then commenced on the part of the provost of the merchants, the manœuvres whose secret we must tell.

In a work in which have been published under cover of certain mysterious forms, several letters of great interest, attributed to different marked persons of the revolution,† we read,

A Letter from the Baron de Nesba (Besenval) to Madame Juliet (Jules de Polignac.)

July, 1789.

“MADAME,

“No human combination will resist the torrent; it has been impossible to prevent the explosion. . . . It is not to speak properly, the people whom we have to dread, but those who sprung from this class, have enough influence over them to irritate them. . . . Irla, (the queen,) must approach the Dutchess d’Apius, (Orleans). She has but little control over the mind of her husband, but she can prevent her children from following the path which their governess, (Madame de Genlis) wishes them to take; and if she can detach them from their father, she would at least have credit in the eyes of those who found their hopes upon the heirs. No one but Madame Deliade, (Adelaide) can bring this reconciliation about. Our position is critical; le Lorrain (the Prince de Lambesc) has done us much injury by his petulance. The new ministers must gain time; nothing is lost, if we are enabled to put this effervescence to sleep. . . . Above all, flatter the new magistrates; they are men and should be ambitious; nothing ought to resist Irla. . . . Nothing must be spared to organize the pretended National Guard in our own way. Especially should the commandants be devoted to Torbe Tesmas (his majesty) all will be repaired.”

We shall further on cite in its place another passage from this letter, in which mention is made of important papers of which Flesselles was the depository. It is certain that the provost of the merchants had received orders to temporize, to amuse the crowd. His character lent itself easily to such part. A man of pleasure, he had imbibed a profound contempt for the multitude in the life of the saloons; he thought with Besenval, that it was essential to quiet the agitation; that the people would not be long in succumbing to the fatigue of their own heroism. Thus when the new oligarchs of the Hotel de Ville exhibited alarm, because they were sincere, he calm and smiling sported with the excitements of the Grève with a cold insolence, and scarcely took pains to conceal that his serenity was mockery. He promised that arms should be brought from the manufactory of Charleville, and when the chests arrived, labelled *artillery*, on opening them only old linen was found in them.‡ He sent the deputies of the district of the Mathurins to get guns from the convent of the Chartreux and they returned with the following certificate only: “I the undersigned, prior of the Chartreuse, certify that we have

* Dusault *Œuvre de sept jours*, p. 284.

† Correspondance Secrète de plusieurs grands personnages à la fin du 18th siècle, p. 93. Paris, 1802. This book contains facts whose authenticity we are not disposed to guarantee; but we have been enabled to verify the exactness of most of the facts which these pieces state. They were besides published by Alexis Roussel, the secretary to the commission charged with the examination of the papers which were found at the Thuilleries, after the 10th of August. Alexis Roussel had a trunk full of these valuable documents. On his death, under the empire, the lieutenant of police, Desmarest, seized all his papers.

‡ Procès-verbal de l’assemblée des électeurs, t. 1. p. 257. Digitized by Google

no fire-arms, nor swords, bayonets, etc., in our house, and that we never have had any."*

Flesselles was evidently deceiving the people; the word treason was heard; it resounded, echo after echo, to the very depths of the Faubourgs, and an innumerable, indignant crowd came together. It was known that barrels of powder had been taken into the Hotel de Ville and that they were deposited in the bureau of the payers of the rentes; they hurry thither in frightful confusion, many having pistols, as if a spark would not have been enough to blow up an entire quarter. A gun was fired over the barrels,† the distribution began. It was a priest who presided over this formidable distribution. A representative of religion before the country, he displayed, for fourteen or fifteen hours, an invincible courage, an obstinate prudence, more heroic at such moments than courage itself. His name should be preserved. It was Lefebvre.

The night came. The provost of the merchants, overcome with fatigue, had a bed made up in the Hotel de Ville,‡ in which he then slept his last sleep. What would happen on the next day? Terrible men had already been perceived around the Bastille which they threatened with their gestures. All the houses were illuminated; it was light as mid-day. Most persons were awake, some to prevent surprise, others to forge instruments of death. Bands of armed men glided through the streets, but like silent groups of phantoms, and nothing was heard through the city but the tread of the bourgeois patrol or the blows of hammers resounding from the anvils.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TAKING OF THE BASTILLE.

Description of the Bastille; its internal regime—Magnanimous prepossessions of the people—Fever of Paris—The vault of the invalides—Treason falsely attributed to the governor—Enthusiasm and heroism of the people—Mademoiselle de Monsigny—Cruel uncertainties of De Launey—The capitulation—The people in the Bastille—Death of De Launey, De Puse, De Miray, of Major de Losme—Admirable devotion—Burgherism at the Hotel de Ville—Why Flesselles was put to death—Generosity of the conquerors—The Swiss feted at the Palais Royal—Paris in the night of the 14th of July—Suspensions of Marat—Universal exultation.

THE Bastille was built at the extremity of the Rue Saint Antoine and of the Boulevard. Fortress, prison, tomb, it consisted of eight large towers connected by thick masses of masonry and was surrounded by

* Buchez et Roux, *Hist. Parlementaire*, t. 2. Livraison, 3. p. 99.

† *Procès-verbal de l'assemblée des électeurs*, t. 1. p. 234.

‡ Dusaulx, *Œuvre de sept jours*, t. 1. p. 287.

§ There were published on the day succeeding the taking of the Bastille and the following days, a crowd of different and contradictory relations, in the midst of which it appears at first difficult to reach the truth. And yet never, as will be seen by our

a large ditch. It was begun in 1369,* under Charles the Fifth. By a like destiny with that of Enguerrand de Marigny, the inventor of the forked gallows, who illustrated them with his dead body, Hugues Aubriot, the founder of the Bastille, was among the first to groan in it.

The aspect of the place was frightful and the genius of evil appeared to have exhausted itself in defending its approaches. The *court yard of the government* so called because the governor had his hotel there, was situated without the fortress and without the principal ditch; and yet to reach even this outer court, it was necessary to pierce two lines of sentinels, to traverse two guard houses, to pass a drawbridge. A long avenue led from the court yard of the government to the ditch of the Bastille; there was a second drawbridge; behind it a third guard house; then a strong barrier in full view, formed of small beams covered with iron.† Then appeared the inner court yard, that in which the towers were plunged, that in which they were stifled between high walls. The nudity and the silence were horrible in it. The clock of the prison here counted the hours slowly upon a dial which two figures in chains adorned. It was into this narrow enclosure that the prisoner, always alone, descended, who was permitted to come there for a short time to contemplate the course of the clouds or a corner of the sky.

It is related that Caligula said to his executioners, "Strike so that they may feel that they are dying;" they felt in the Bastille that they were dying. A breathing hole pierced in walls of the thickness of ten or twelve feet and closed by three grates of crossed bars, transmitted to most of the rooms enough light to cause its absence to be regretted. There were in it apartments with iron cages,‡ recalling the Chateau of Plessisles-Tours and the tortures of Cardinal Balue. But there was nothing comparable with the lower dungeons, the frightful resorts of toads, lizards, monstrous rats and spiders.§ Several of those dungeons whose furniture consisted of an enormous stone covered with a little straw, and which were sunk nineteen feet below the level of the court yard, had no other opening than a hole overlooking the ditch into which the common sewer of the Rue Saint Antoine discharged itself.|| So that they

recital, was certainly more necessary, even in the smallest circumstances. Our first care has then been to collect all the scattered documents; we then submitted them to a labor of very careful verification, and have a firm confidence that our account is true about things and just about persons.

We will avail ourselves of this opportunity publicly to thank here the bibliopholists as Messieurs d'Yenne, Dufey (de l'Yonne) and Labedolière, who have kindly placed the materials in their possession at our disposal.

We owe especially a testimony of lively gratitude to, M. Lairtullier, the learned author of the "Celebrated Women of the Revolution," who has pushed his obliging disposition so far as to have a whole library consisting of journals and extremely rare and curious small works, carried to our house:

To the venerable Colonel Maurin, who owns, as is well known, an inestimable collection of books, journals, pamphlets, cuts, placards, portraits, medals, concerning our revolutionary period, and who has graciously opened to us his treasures:

Finally, to M. Charles Menetrier, who has made an especial study of the bibliographical part of the revolution, of whom we might say, he is a living library.

* *Remarques historiques et anecdotes sur la Bastille*, p. 2. Paris, 1789. † *Ibid.* p. 4.

‡ This fact, affirmed by the author of the Historical remarks, is denied by Montjoie and doubted by the editors of the *Bastille Unveiled*.

§ *La Bastille dévoilée Livraison*, 2. p. 24. Paris, 1789.

|| Linguet, *Mémoires sur la Bastille*, p. 63.

breathed only an infected atmosphere, in company with hideous animals in the bosom of darkness.

There was handed over to the tormentors that Mazers de Latude, who expiated by thirty-five years of captivity, the crime of having denounced an imaginary plot to Madame de Pompadour when in the age of heedlessness. Who does not know the marvellous history of that prisoner? All Europe knew how after a first escape, of the fruits of which too much confidence deprived him, he made a ladder one hundred and twenty feet long out of shirts and handkerchiefs; how followed by his companion D'Alègre, he descended from the top of the towers in the darkest part of the night; how with water to his middle and sentinels four yards from him, he pierced the wall which separated the ditch of the Bastille from that of the gate of Saint Antoine; how at last pursued beyond the frontiers and reseized again at Amsterdam, he lost the liberty he had regained by so much boldness, perseverance and genius. Brought back to the Bastille he was compelled to pass the severe winter of 1757, with irons on his feet and hands, sleeping upon straw. Whilst he slept two loop holes of two inches and a half wide breathed an icy wind upon him which almost deprived him of sight, the cold cut off his upper lip; his teeth remaining uncovered split; the roots of the hair of his beard were burned; he became entirely bald.*

But what were those physical sufferings of the captives compared with those moral pains, of that agony without assigned limit, without known measure, whose crushing uniformity nothing broke? For the bridge of the inner court once crossed, one was indeed a prisoner. Enveloped in the darkest shades of mystery, condemned to an absolute, formidable ignorance, both of the fault imputed to him and the kind of punishment which awaited him. He had no longer friends, family, country, love. His whole universe was to consist hereafter in the fierce turnkeys who brought him his food, or in the unfortunate men whose presence he divined by the noise of the gates rolling on their hinges, or the grinding of the bolts prolonged through the sonorous void of the towers. That which had no echo, was the noise of supplications; that which did not pierce the thickness of the vaults, was the sound of friendly words. Children were mourning for their father without suspecting that they were living above him.

Still in despair one might have been able to become his own destiny! But no; a barbarous foresight deprived the prisoner of all means of suicide. "They left a prisoner," says Linguet, "neither scissors, nor knives, nor razors. When the turnkeys carry him the food which his tears moisten, they cut it up each time."† They could not even die of starvation. Latude having remained one hundred and thirty-three hours without eating or drinking, his executioners opened his mouth with the keys and forced him to swallow food;‡ the life of each victim was probably regarded as the property of the persecutors, as their inviolable prey. Thus then, through a caprice of clemency, they were compelled

* Testimony of the surgeon Granjean, in the *Mémoires de Latude*, t. 1. p. 106, Paris, 1793.

† Linguet, *Mémoires sur la Bastille*, p. 77.

‡ *Mémoires de Latude*, p. 107.

to live to gnaw their hearts. Unfortunate men, they were so completely cut off from mankind, that the oppressed continued to cry for mercy, when the oppressor had been dead for some time. There were those who, crazy from grief, frantic from rage, ended by leaving their dust in the Bastille, though they no longer had an enemy, and simply because they had been forgotten . . . What did they do with the corpses? How, according to the beautiful expression of Linguet, "did they avenge on the body the flight of the soul?"* It is certain that they were not given up to the relatives. There was a Bastille even for the dead; it was Saint Paul, and care was taken to inscribe only the initials of the names on the register of the dead,† in order to condemn the victims to a forgetfulness even darker than that of the tomb.

Yet among the inhabitants were found some who had not only not been stifled by it, but who had, on the contrary, communicated great historical lustre to it. To the favored visitors who went to this fortress to seek for subjects of meditation or souvenirs, could be shown the platform set apart for the melancholy promenades of the Cardinal de Rohan; the dungeon in which Pasquier placed a gag in the mouth of the Count de Lally to stifle his shouts; the door through which La Bourdonnaie came forth after a cruel captivity of three years, reinstated, but inconsolable and dying. One of these towers had made Marshal Bassompierre expiate the alarm which he caused Richelieu. Another tower had received the man with the iron mask, enveloped in the alarming secret of his destiny. The doors of a third had closed upon the Provost de Beaumont, who was guilty of *having known* the sacrilegious compact which starved the people. In the depths of the ear court, known by the characteristic name of the *Court of the Well*, the Marshal Biron had been beheaded, and the hooks which fastened his scaffold to the wall were still seen.

Biron, Bassompierre, Lally, Rohan, such names explain sufficiently how menacing the Bastille was to the nobility. Thus the cahiers of the nobles demanded its destruction.‡ The truth is that reserved especially for courtiers, for those who followed them, or for men of letters, the Bastille was an aristocratic prison. Those who had been confined in it, frequently boasted of it when they left it. The poor did not enter it;§ they were sent to suffer at Bicêtre.

A thing for ever worthy of respect, admiration and gratitude. In the month of July, 1789, the people wanted bread, and what did they ask for? Arms. They could run to the Bicêtre, and what fortress did they talk of overthrowing? The Bastille. There are moments of sovereign inspiration in the lives of great people as in that of great men. An instinct of divine essence warned these rude artisans, these uncultivated hosts of the faubourgs, that the glory of chivalric transports belonged to them; that the first of privileges was to annihilate that which was associated with tortures, and that liberty should announce itself by an act conformable with its genius, that is, by a benefit conferred on its

* Mémoires sur la Bastille, p. 111.

† L'Ami du Roi, etc. Cahier, 3. Chap. 44, p. 99.

‡ See above in the Chapter, Movement of the Elections.

§ L'Ami du Roi, etc., cahier 3. chap. 44, p. 101.

enemies. Yes, plebeians placing the destruction of an aristocratic prison in the number of their most ardent occupations, is what has not been sufficiently remarked, and is what surrounds the first blows that the revolution struck, with an immortal splendor.*

On the 14th of July, at the break of day, a stranger presented himself to Besenval. "Baron," he said to him in a sharp tone, "the barriers will be burned to-day . . . Do not attempt to prevent it. You will sacrifice your men without extinguishing a torch." This stranger had a noble countenance, a fiery look, a daring gesture. Besenval was troubled and stuttered a reply which he did not remember.† The stranger disappeared. What was to be done? Besenval appeared to be paralyzed. He had recently built a delightful bathing saloon, which was one of the curiosities of the capital; and there were some of his party who suspected him of having seen in the revolt of Paris the possible destruction of his house.‡

They were preparing for the contest from one end of Paris to the other. "To the Bastille," was the cry. Every one wore a red and blue cockade in his hat. A crowd of soldiers had escaped from Saint-Denis, who, mingling with the groups, distributed cartridges, or taught the citizens how to handle their guns.§ Cars loaded with meal passed along without notice; but at the news that a boat load of powder had been captured during the evening, the streets resounded with passionate applause. Women applauded the armed men from the windows.|| All were not there yet; all were burning to be. The Abbe Lefebvre having closed the outer doors of the powder magazine at two in the morning, an impatient multitude had come to break them in with blows of axes, and the intrepid priest had felt a ball graze his hair.¶ What was left of the powder was distributed in horns, but the resources were not sufficient either for the number of the arrivals or their warlike avidity, which false news, constantly spread, rendered fiercer. "The Royal-Allemand is in battle array at the barrier of the throne—the Royal-Cravate is massacring every thing in the faubourg Saint-Antoine—the Rue de Charonne is full of blood—regiments are advancing from Saint-Denis; they have reached la Chapelle." The messengers of evil were generally well dressed men. One was remarked, who wore a blue dress adorned with gold frogs; he was covered with dust, inundated with sweat, and appeared to have performed a long journey.** The committee of the Hotel de Ville having sent orders to the districts to sound the alarm, the streets were unpaved, barricades raised, ditches dug: Paris was a camp.

An enormous mass of people had gone to the Hotel of the Invalides in search of guns. The governor, M. de Sombreuil, appeared at the gate. He asked them to respect in him the laws of fidelity, and the

* This connection has not escaped M. Michelet, who expresses himself in these touching terms about it: "And what did the Bastille do to the people, which the people never entered . . . But justice spoke to them, and a voice which speaks still more strongly to the heart, the voice of humanity and mercy; this gentle voice which appears to be weak and which overthrows towers, had already for ten years made the Bastille totter."

† Mémoires de Besenval, t. 2. p. 365.

‡ Mémoires de Rivarol, p. 46. Mémoires de Weber, t. 1. p. 373.

§ La Semaine Mémorable, p. 12; 24th of July, 1789.

|| Lettre à M. le Marquis de Luchet.

¶ Procès-verbal de l'assemblée des Electeurs, t. 1. p. 268.

** Ibid. p. 298.

conscience of a soldier. A courier had been sent to Versailles, could they not await his return? The assailants consented to it,* when a voice is raised, "they ask for time from us, to make us lose ours." Every thing is shaken by this remark. They leap into the ditches and disarm the sentinels; the parishioners of Saint-Etienne du Mont follow their curate, who had become the leader of the band; the city attorney, Ethis de Corny, gives his carriage horses to draw a cannon;† the vault in which the arms were concealed is broken into. But lo, a noise of groans and imprecations was heard. The rush was so great and impetuous on the staircase, that those who were remounting, after having armed themselves, had been violently thrown down to the bottom of the vault, where they perished, stifled. A frightful catastrophe was imminent; for the crowd was thickening, urged on by its own weight. Then robust men, who had first descended, remained still erect in the vault, braced themselves against each other, and forced the unarmed multitude to remount by presenting bayonets in their faces.‡ In this extreme disorder, the lights they had used to guide them in the vaults became extinguished,§ the shouts redoubled, they were fighting in the darkness, and the vault retained some of those who had invaded it. Those who had only fainted, were carried up near the dome, or laid upon the grass,|| and then every one hastened towards the Bastille.

There was at that period a restaurateur named Duval in the Rue des Boucheries, of the faubourg Saint-Germain, at whose house the principal agitators took their meals. The door of the room in which the tables were set was suddenly opened, and a young man appears. He had a streaming brow, his hat placed martially over his eyes, with his clothes in tatters. It was Camille Desmoulins, who was returning from the Invalides.¶ He strikes the earth with the butt of his gun, exclaiming, "we are free," gives a rapid recital of what he had seen, and all hasten to their friends of the Palais Royal, to urge them on against the Bastille.

The governor of this fortress had been laboring for several days with preparations for defence. He had carried cart loads of paving stones to the top of the towers, and constructed pinchers suitable to tear down chimneys whose ruins were to crush the besiegers.** He carved embrasures of a foot and a half, pierced loopholes, closed up a window with oaken planks united with ploughs and tongues, and drew from the armory twelve of these ramparts guns which were called the *playthings of the Count de Saxe*. Fifteen pieces of cannon lining the towers, three field pieces placed in the inner court opposite the entrance, four hundred biscailens, threethousand cartridges,†† such were the materials for defence.

* Procès-verbal de l'assemblée des Electeurs, t. 1. p. 299 et suiv, relation of M. Ethis de Corny. † Ibid.

‡ Journée de Jean Baptiste Humbert. He was among the assailants.

§ L'Ami du Roi, etc., cahier 3. chap. 43. p. 90.

|| Journée de Jean Baptiste Humbert.

¶ L'Ami du Roi, etc., cahier 3 : chap. 43. p. 93.

** Relation de la prise de la Bastille par un de ses défenseurs, in the *Revue Rétrospective*, t. 4. p. 234.

†† And not fifteen hundred, as says *Ami du Roi*; see the account quoted above, and which is from the pen of the Swiss officer who commanded the active part of the garrison.

It is true that the garrison was badly provided with food and water,* but whether the people triumphed or not, the siege could be only of a short duration. It is also true, that the garrison was only composed of one hundred and fourteen men, of whom thirty-two were Swiss, of the regiment of Salis-Samadé, and eighty-two Invalides; but it was so strong that the Bastille had no need of a greater number of defenders.†

To reach the first drawbridge of which we have spoken above, and which was called the *advanced draw-bridge*, it was necessary to follow a winding road, bordered on the right by the barracks and on the left by a range of shops. These shops being so situated as to serve as a cover for the besiegers, de Launey had an interest in destroying them, in order to free the approaches; he did not do it, however, because he drew a very large revenue from the locality.‡ Writers of his own party§ have also accused him of not having wished to point his cannon towards the arsenal, for fear lest a small house he had in that direction, to which he was attached, should be injured.

The alarms of the bourgeois committee of the Hotel de Ville were, however, divided between the Bastille and the people. It was impossible to suffer the faubourg Saint-Antoine to remain threatened by cannon, and yet they trembled to see the people victorious; for then they might become the masters. Thus combatted within itself, the committee showed as much ardor in preventing the strife, as the people did in bringing it on. Belon, an officer of the arquebuss; Billefod, a sergeant-major of artillery, and Chaton, an old sergeant of the French guards, were then sent from the Hotel de Ville to the governor of the fortress, commissioned to say to him, "withdraw your cannon, pledge your word you will commit no hostile acts, and on our side we will assure you that the people of the faubourg Saint-Antoine and the environs will not carry on any hostile enterprise against the place."|| This was disposing very lightly of the popular indignation, but in its haste to interfere, the permanent committee did not calculate obstacles.

The Bastille was not yet closely enclosed, when Belon, Billeford and Chaton, reached it. Thus they were received not only without difficulty, but with courtesy. De Launey exhibited much serenity. "Though they have burned the barriers," he said, "I hope they will not burn my bridges." He was going to table and made the deputies from the Hotel de Ville seat themselves with him, entertained them familiarly, and immediately gave an order in their presence to withdraw the cannon, which was done at once.

When the envoys of the permanent committee were in the act of retiring, an advocate of the parliament of Paris presented himself at the *advanced draw-bridge*. Two armed bourgeois, Toulouse and Bourlier, escorted him, and he asked for the governor in the name of the district

* Ibid. p. 286. L'Ami du Roi, etc., cahier 3; chap. 44. p. 103.

† The officer who wrote the account quoted above agrees with this. See la Revue Rétrospective, t. 4. p. 291.

‡ Vie politique et privée de Santerre, written in accordance with the written documents left by himself, and the notes of Augustin Santerre his eldest son, by A. Carro, p. 38.

§ Mémoires de Rivarol, p. 46.

|| Procès-verbal de l'assemblée des Electeurs, t. 1. p. 279.

Saint-Louis de la Culture. It was the same Thuriot de La Rosière, who afterwards, as president of the convention, was to drown the voices of the conquered Thermidoriens by the noise of his bell, and to draw on himself this terrible apostrophe of their chief, "for the last time, president of assassins, I demand to speak."

Though the Bastille was beginning to be invested on all sides, Thuriot had at first neither a refusal to submit to, nor a hesitation to combat. He knocks, he enters.* Conducted to the governor, he said to him: "I come, sir, in the name of the nation, to represent to you, that the cannon planted on these towers, are spreading alarm through all Paris; I beseech you to have them taken down." "These pieces have always been on the towers," replied Delauney, "and I cannot take them down, but in pursuance of an order from the king. Informed of the alarm of which they are the cause, I have had them drawn back and taken from the embrasures."† Thuriot requests to be introduced into the *Inner Court*; De Launey refuses; but at the entreaty of Major de Losme, he finally determines to lower the second draw-bridge, and open the iron grating. The inner court had a menacing appearance; the attendants of the Bastille were under arms, and three cannon were ready to sweep the avenue. Without being concerned, Thuriot summoned the garrison to surrender. They contented themselves with swearing that they would never fire unless attacked, an oath which the governor proposed, and which he took himself.‡ Thuriot then exacts that they should show him the position of the cannon on the towers. New hesitancy on the part of de Launey; new urgency on that of his officers; they ascend. The cannon were withdrawn about four feet from the embrasures, but were still in position and masked. When they reached the top of the tower called la Bazinière, one of those that overlooked the Arsenal, an unexpected, formidable sight awaited them. The whole faubourg Saint-Antoine was in motion, it was rolling towards the Bastille. De Launey turned pale, and seizing Thuriot by the arm, said, "what are you doing, sir? You are abusing a sacred title to betray me." "If you go on," replied Thuriot, in a resolute tone, "one of us will fall into the ditch." De Launey was silent.§ Having scarcely descended with the governor, Thuriot said in a loud voice, in the presence of the garrison, that *he was content*; that he would make his report to the people, who, beyond question, would not refuse to furnish a bourgeois guard, *to guard the Bastille in conjunction with the troops which were in it.*|| But the people would not listen to guarding the Bastille, still less to doing it in conjunction with the Swiss of Salis-Samade; what they wanted, was its destruction. Thuriot here expressed the sentiments of burgherism; he spoke the lan-

* Recit de la conduit de M. Thuriot de la Rosière pendant sa députation à la Bastille. Declaration des assiégés, dans la Bastille dévoilée, t. 1. p. 89.

† Declaration des assiégés, etc., t. 1. p. 91.

‡ Ibid.—Recit de la conduite de M. Thuriot. See also the Procès-verbal de l'assemblée des Electeurs, t. 1. p. 309.

§ This fact is found in the Recit de la Conduite de Thuriot, and in the report presented to the permanent committee; it is not stated in the Declaration des assiégés, nor in the Relation de la prise, &c., but we may see why.

|| This circumstance is not mentioned in the Recit de la Conduite de Thuriot; it is affirmed by the defenders of the Bastille.

guage of the Hotel de Ville. Thus, when after having appeared at a window of the *government*,* and harangued from thence the popular excitement, he left the fortress, a thousand imprecations pursued him. The two musketeers who had accompanied him to the first draw-bridge, had been carried off by the flow and re-flow of the multitude. "We are betrayed," exclaimed the most animated. They surrounded Thuriot and re-conducted him to the district of Saint-Louis de la Culture, with an axe raised above his head.†

The siege began, the crowd was immense, invincibly irritated. The winding road, the surrounding streets, the courts behind the barracks, the faubourg Saint Antoine were filled with armed men. Thousands of voices raised the imperious cry towards heaven through the noise of the discharges; "we want the Bastille."‡ But the Bastille appeared to be inaccessible behind its double ditch. Two courageous citizens, Dавanne and Dassain, slip down from the roof of a perfumer upon a wall which touched the guard-house placed beyond the first drawbridge. Having reached the guard-house, they leap into the court-yard; two old soldiers, Aubin Bonnemer and Louis Tournay, imitate them, and they all strike with blows of axes the chains which hold up the bridge. It fell so violently that it rebounded several feet upward. A man was crushed, another killed. The people sprung on it, shouting in triumph.

But they were still only in the exterior court, that of the *government*. The second drawbridge remained to be crossed. The people rush towards it with impetuosity, receive a discharge of musketry, and recoil the length of the avenue, which was tinged with their blood.§ Such was the confusion, that most of them were ignorant by what an intrepid effort the chains of the first bridge had been broken; they thought that the governor himself had given orders to lower it, in order to draw on the multitude, and thus expose them to a more easy carnage. There were inexpressible transports of fury. Whilst some were ranging themselves against the walls or under the gates, ready to resume the attack, others were re-crossing the first bridge to spread through the city the news of the treason which had been committed. . . . De Launey was guilty of having commanded the fire, not of having committed the perfidious atrocity which was imputed to him, and justice requires that his memory should be washed from it. But the rapid adoption of the error|| which overwhelmed him, proves of what blackness Paris thought him capable.

Fifteen or twenty wounded had been deposited in the different houses of the Rue Cérissaye; one was selected whom there was no chance of saving, and carried about expiring on a frame, as a standard for vengeance. It was a soldier of the guards. At this sight, and the recital of the treason with which the governor was charged, those who had hesitated ran to arms. A keeper of the royal imposts, who, in his blue sur-

* The Hotel of the Governor was thus called.

† L'Ami du Roi, etc., cahier 3. chap. 45. p. 108.

‡ Declaration des Assiégés, in the Bastille dévoilée, t. 1. p. 92.

§ L'Ami du Roi, says this first discharge killed no one; this is an error, as will be seen further on.

|| This error is found in most of the relations of the period.

tout, had been taken at first for a sub-officer of the garrison, urges his horses into the midst of the place de Grève, and in a voice of emotion says, "Come, my friends, come, we are going to save Paris." Crowds followed him. The French guards on their side were shaken. A detachment of the grenadiers of the company of Ruffeville, of musketeers of the company of Lubersac, hurried towards the Bastille, under the leading of Sergeants Wagnier and La Barthe.* By their side advanced two thousand soldiers without uniform, the soldiers of a day, whom the manager of the queen's washing-house, Pierre Auguste Hulin led into the fire, and who united the soul of a knight to the stature of a gladiator. He had said to the men who had proclaimed him their leader, "I will lead you as victors, or you will carry me off dead."† Two cannons which were on the place de Grève, were taken and dragged to the siege.

At the moment when the guards entered the *court of the government*, a thick cloud of smoke enveloped the fortress; volumes of flames were rising from the advanced guard-house, the barracks, the hotel of the governor, and several carts of dung to which Santerre had set fire,‡ were burning before the second drawbridge. But these burning carts, instead of assisting the besiegers, only embarrassed the attack. It was absolutely necessary to remove the burning fire, and it could only be done at the risk of the most frightful danger, the besieged having pierced two loopholes in the drawbridge in which were placed guns from the ramparts loaded with case-shot.§ Elie, an officer of the infantry regiment of the queen, and a merchant named Réole, lead the way with a firm step. Two citizens, whose names have not been preserved, spring forward in their turn and fall dead.|| Elie and Réole, more fortunate, are enabled to drag back the burning cars, escaping from danger. A cannon was at once levelled in front of the drawbridge, in hopes of breaking its chains. A dark enthusiasm had seized the combatants: the attack became furious. The adjacent streets were filled with people. They fired from every roof and every window of the adjoining houses. Some cannon¶ were fired from the place, one with case-shot; but the ardor of the besiegers increased with the danger. At the foot of the fortress pressed, mingled in the same enthusiasm, laborers, merchants, soldiers, strangers just arrived in the city, priests, women. A young girl was wounded, who, unable to restrain her lover, had come to combat by his side.** Hope and courage were immense. A citizen having been mortally wounded, said with his head bent on the arms of those who held him, "I am dying, my friends, but stand fast, you will take it."†† And still continually rose the cry, "We want the Bastille."

* Le Cousin Jacques, *Precis exact de la prise de la Bastille*, p. 2.

† L'Ami du Roi, etc., *Cahier 3. chap. 45. 111.*

‡ *Vie Politique et Privée de Santerre*, p. 41.

§ Relation of the Swiss officer who placed them there. See *la Revue Rétrospective*, t. 4. p. 289.

|| *Hist. de la Révolution par deux amis de la liberté*, t. 2. p. 24.

¶ And not one person, as is said in the *Déclaration des Assiégés*. See on this point the avowal of the Swiss officer who commanded a part of the garrison, t. 4. p. 290, de *la Revue Rétrospective*.

** Michel Cubières, *Voyage à la Bastille*, p. 34. See also Dusaulx, *Discours Historique*, 1re partie.

†† *Discours Historique de Dusaulx*, 1re partie.

In the very height of this generous exaltation appeared, easily recognizable by the beauty of his brown face and his lofty stature, the abbé Fauchet, a weak head but a powerful heart, one of those men who reach madness in traversing heroism. He had not yet made his famous speech, "It was the aristocracy that crucified Jesus,"* but he had already for a long time given himself to the revolution. He did not, however, appear as a soldier. Sent, as were the three electors his colleagues, by the committee of the Hotel de Ville, he was commissioned only to represent its alarms. The views of the committee were bounded to inducing the governor of the Bastille to divide the charge of the fortress between the garrison and the bourgeois soldiery, placing it in the hands of the city.† The people required more as the price of the blood which had been shed. The three members of parliament made signals to the governor which were not seen; they addressed pacific exhortations to the besiegers which were not listened to.‡ They then retired, when they saw a flag floating at the extremity of the Rue Saint Antoine. It was some members of their body whom Ethys de Corny, the city attorney, was escorting to the sound of the drum. Having reached the court of the government, they hastened to show the flag; one of them shakes a white handkerchief on the end of a cane; another exclaims, "We come as members of parliament, stop firing." The invalides, who were ranged on the top of the towers, raise their caps in token of peace, and reverse their guns,§ but at the same time the Swiss who held the inner court, were not warned of it, and pour in a murderous fire. The indignation of the people then assumed a character at once fierce and sublime. Thinking themselves surrounded by traitors, they mingle imprecations on the Hotel de Ville and the Bastille. Ethys de Corny must die; the sword and pistols of an elector, who sought to cover him with his body, were torn from him.|| If it was impossible to conquer, was it impossible to die? A word was said which all repeated: "Our dead bodies will fill the ditch."¶

In the midst of this, a young and beautiful girl, who they are assured is the daughter of the governor, is led to the foot of the fortress. Furious men surrounded her, exclaiming, "She must be burned alive, if the governor does not yield." Her father was among the besieged; he hears the horrible threat; from the top of the towers he perceives that

* Paganel, *Essai Historique et Critique sur la Révolution*, t. 1. p. 436.

† The following is the text of the decree:

"The permanent committee of the Parisian soldiery, considering that there should not be any military force in Paris, which is not under the control of the city, charges the deputies which it sends to M. de Launey to inquire of him if he is disposed to receive into the place the troops of the Parisian military, who will guard it in concert with the troops now there, and who shall be under the orders of the city." *Procès-verbal de l'Assemblée des Electeurs*, t. 1. p. 318.

‡ *Rapport de Delavigne, Chignard, Fauchet et Boletidoux*, in the *Procès-verbal*, etc., t. 1. p. 334.

§ *Rapport d'Ethys de Corny*, dans le *procès-verbal*, p. 336. See also la *Déclaration des Assiégés*, in the *Bastille Devoillée*, t. 1. p. 95. This declaration is incorrect in several points, for example, the order of facts is entirely inverted in it.

|| Relation exacte de ce qui s'est passé dans la députation en *Parlementaire à la Bastille*, p. 6, Paris, July 16th.

¶ *Procès-verbal de l'Assemblée des Electeurs*, t. p. 340.

his daughter has fainted on the straw they were preparing to kindle; horrified, lost, he advances, receives two musket-shots, and falls. . . . But whilst his comrades pressed around him, one of the combatants, the magnanimous Bonnemer, springs towards the designated victim, saves her, carries her off, and after having placed her in safety, returns to the combat.*

Will they be able to take the Bastille or at least make it capitulate? Nothing appeared to announce it. Forced to fight without cover against inaccessible enemies, solid battlements and thick walls; destitute of all the resources which the art of sieges furnishes to constancy and daring, the besiegers were besides abandoned to the thousand chances of inexperience, precipitation and disorder. Here were engines which they played in the chimerical hope of wetting the priming of the cannon of the place, without perceiving that the water scarcely reached the top of the towers in light spray;† there was a combatant whom one of his companions knocked down with the butt end of his musket, to prevent him from firing the powder magazine.‡ The intrepidity of the people was admirable, but more brilliant than decisive. There was no general plan of attack, no direction. The French guards alone maintained some discipline; the crowd followed only the inspirations of its courage. Thus the garrison had lost but one of its defenders after a combat of five hours,§ whilst there were eighty-eight of the assailants wounded and eighty-three killed.||

But a superior power to that of armies weighed on the Bastille. The roar of the cannon had already weighed down De Launey beneath the injustice of his cause, and had precipitated him from the height of his confident pride into inexpressible anxiety. The Invalides said to him, "we must surrender;" the Swiss said, "we must resist;" and he, now sombre, now exalted to fury, walking about in agitation or stopping to listen to the bellowing of the crowd, dared neither to be firm nor bend.¶ To surrender! But were not those below awaiting a prey? To resist? But those floods of blood. . . . Against the rash heroes who exposed their naked breasts to his cannon, he could perhaps do every thing; what could he against the dead bodies who were gliding around the fortress and who were rising up before him? His enemies were invincible; they were the phantoms of his heart. The fear of death did not reach him since his final determination was to kill himself, but by blowing up the Bastille, by concealing his suicide in the annihilation of a faubourg.

* Beaulieur, *Essais Historiques*, t. 1. p. 330. Dusaulx, *Œuvre de Sept. Jours*, p. 296, The saviour of Mademoiselle de Monsigny, who was the person saved, was solemnly crowned at the Hotel de Ville, on the 3d of February, 1790, in the presence of Bailly, by the hand of Mlle. Monsigny herself.

† Vie politique et privée de Santerre.

‡ The man who saved the powder magazine was named Humbert. He himself related the fact, in a pamphlet styled *Journée de Jean Baptiste Humbert*, at the end of which is a certificate signed by four of the combatants.

§ Declaration des assiégés, etc., t. 1. p. 113. Relation de la prise de la Bastille, etc. *Revue Retrospective*, t. 4. p. 291.

¶ A statement drawn up by the Commune in the beginning of the month of August 1789.

† La Relation de la prise de la Bastille, etc. p. 295.

Full of implacable despair he took a match from a cannon and approached the powder magazine with a fixed look and an extended hand. It was done, if two officers had not had time to run to him.* They levelled bayonets to his breast and drove him back. What is he to resolve upon? Through the increasing noise of the firing there rose the cry of the irritated sovereigns, "Lower the bridges, lower the bridges," whilst the Invalides increasing their urgencies, repeated, "We must surrender." More and more troubled, De Launey descended into the council hall, where he sat down to write precipitately.† At this moment Louis de Flue, who commanded the Swiss, opens the door of the room. The cannon of the besiegers threatened the chains of the second drawbridge, should the Swiss sweep the avenue? Was the governor decided? He came to receive his orders. He replied by holding out to the officer a note which contained these words: "We have twenty thousand pounds of powder; we will blow up the garrison and the entire quarter if you do not accept the capitulation." The Swiss officer spoke with vivacity. Why surrender so quickly? Were not the gates whole? Had the fortress been damaged? The garrison had only lost one killed and two or three wounded, and it capitulated.‡ De Launey could not now be shaken; the Swiss officer must obey. He went to the drawbridge and pushed out the note through one of the loop holes he had himself pierced; at the same time they cried out within, "We consent to surrender, if they will not massacre us."

How were they to get the note from which the assailants were separated the whole breadth of the ditch? A plank is brought, which is extended upon the parapet, some mount above it so as to make a counterpoise, and with a firm step, an unknown person ventures along this moveable road. Having reached the end, he thrusts out his arm, when a musket shot is fired and he falls dead into the ditch.§ Maillard followed him, succeeds him, takes the note and hands it to Elie, who having read in a loud voice, fixes it upon the point of his sword. The French guards said, "On the honor of soldiers, you shall receive no injury; lower the bridges."|| They fall. Then following Elie, Hulin, Arne, Maillard, Réole, François, Tournay, Humbert, Louis Morin, the people hastened in like a torrent.

The garrison was drawn up in a lane in the court, the Invalides on the right, the Swiss on the left. They had all deposited their muskets, against the wall, and at the sight of the people, who entered clamoring they raised their caps.¶ The Invalides did more, they applauded; but their uniforms designating them to the rage of the multitude, they incurred the greatest dangers. The Swiss on the contrary, having been at first taken for prisoners, on account of the cloth frocks they wore, they

* They were called Ferrand and Bequan.

† All the accounts state that it was the Swiss officer who wrote the capitulation; the contrary is proved by his own declaration, see *Revue Rétrospective*, t. 4. p. 290.

‡ Ibid. p. 291.

§ *Journée de Jean Baptiste Humbert*—Humbert was there.

|| *Déclaration des assiégés*, etc., t. 1. p. 107. *Hist. de la Revolution par deux amis de la liberté*, t. 2. p. 31.

¶ *L'Ami du Roi*, etc. *Cahier 3. chap. 45*, p. 115.

surrounded them tenderly, called them brethren and embraced them.* One of them alone perished, betrayed by his own fears. It was the same who had pointed the guns of the rampart. He had already cleared the bridge and gained the avenue. . . . A sabre stroke which cleft his skull extended him dead in the midst of the blood he had shed.

Dressed in a light grey body coat, with a bare head and leaning upon a golden headed sword cane, the governor stood silent. A tradesman of the street des Noyers Saint Jacques, recognized him and arrested him.† He wished to stab himself, but is restrained and carried off. They did not know that the agony of his soul had already avenged the people. Miray, his adjutant, who had formerly served in the French guards, was also arrested. Thinking himself lost, he exclaimed in a stifled voice, "Comrades, will you allow a brave man to perish miserably?" The guards hastened to his assistance and five of them led him off among them,‡ protecting him with their uniform which was beloved by the people. The lieutenant of the king, Du Puget, had the presence of mind to change his dress,§ armed with a heavy club and with his hair in disorder, he mingled among the crowd and disappeared.

The disorder was immense, but heroic. A quivering curiosity animated all countenances; a word sprung from every mouth, "Where are the victims? Here is liberty." Some penetrate into the vaults, traverse the mysterious sinuosities of the fortress, become embittered at the doors of the dungeon.|| Immortal delirium of our fathers! A soldier who was descending in haste from the platform where he had been forgotten, meets at the foot of an obscure staircase the intrepid Louis Morin. Instead of flying, he hangs around his neck weeping, "Oh, brother, have pity on some poor soldiers who have been forced to obey; swear to intercede for them." "I swear it," replied the noble youth, and he kept his word.¶ But there are touching episodes, lamentable mistakes, fatal hazards. A child of ten years old having appeared on the towers a ball fired from the Rue Saint Antoine struck him in the head.** The officer Béquard, the same who had prevented the governor from blowing up the Bastille, was pointed out as one of the turnkeys. His wrist was struck off by a blow from a sabre, and they were about to carry in triumph through Paris the hand that had saved the Faubourg Saint Antoine.†† Béquard had not fought; he was killed however, and the fatal error was not discovered, until it was too late to repair it. Thus his death was chiefly mourned by the conquerors, and his family was mingled in the testimonies of public gratitude with those of the martyrs of the day.

The doors of the dungeons have in the meanwhile rolled back beneath a generous effort, the prisoners are free. Alas, for three of them, it was too late.

The victim for seven years of the inexplicable vengeance of an implacable father, the first, who was named the Count de Solages, found nei-

* L'Ami du Roi, etc. Cahier 3. chap. 45, p. 115.

† La Bastille dévoilée, t. 1. 117.

‡ L'Ami du Roi, etc. Cahier 3. chap. 46, p. 118. § Ibid.

|| Discours historiques de Dusaulx, 1e. partie, p. 343.

¶ Le Cousin Jacques, p. 77.

†† Hist. de la Révolution par deux amis de la liberté, t. 2. p. 33.

ther relatives who would consent to recognize him, nor property, which had become the prey of greedy collaterals.* The second was named Whyte. Of what crime was he guilty, accused or at least suspected? It was never known. He himself was interrogated in vain. He had lost his reason in the Bastille. The third, Tervernier, on seeing his liberators, had taken them for executioners, and prepared to defend himself;† he was undeceived by their embracing him, but he was met the next day, wandering through the city, and speaking strange words; he was mad.

Not a corner of the Bastille escaped the ardent investigations of the crowd. They sounded the fortress to its darkest depths, and brought up horrible trophies; chains, which the hands of many innocent persons had perhaps used; arms, of a strange, frightful form; machines, whose use no one could guess; an old iron corslet, which appeared to have been invented for the purpose of retaining a man through all the articulations of his body, and of reducing him to an eternal immobility;‡ the picture which adorned the chapel of the Bastille, and which represented St. Peter in bonds;§ for they desired the image of servitude to pursue, weigh down the prisoners, even at the foot of the altar.

The council hall, impetuously invaded, gave up its archives; but the popular fury destroyed or dispersed them. Still some pieces stamped with a funereal seal have been preserved for the justice of history, and for example a touching letter from Latude to Madame de Pompadour, in which there is this phrase: "On the 25th of this month, September, (1760,) at four o'clock in the evening, I shall have suffered one hundred thousand hours."|| The unfortunate man, when he wrote these terrible words, had yet two hundred thousand hours of suffering to count.

When the conquerors were leaving the Bastille, they saw a woman bent over the field of battle, and seeking among the dead bodies for a well known face. The son of this woman, having disappeared for some days from the maternal roof, and leading a life of opprobrium, the unfortunate mother flattered herself, he had made a glorious expiation. Condemned to mourn over him whilst living, she had wished to be enabled to mourn for him as a martyr. Not finding him among the dead, she retired in despair.¶

It had been determined that the governor should be conducted to the Hotel de Ville. They took up the march. Elie opened it, carrying the capitulation on the point of his sword; Legris and Maillard followed, their countenances still radiant with heroism; then the governor to whom Hulin and Arné formed bucklers of their bodies; then L'Epine, a young attorney's clerk, full of devotion and courage.** This passage was a triumph, but a triumph half enveloped in a punishment. The memoirs of Linguet had given an execrable celebrity to the governor; when he passed, the people thought they saw the Bastille passing. He now, it was said, groaned and trembled. He had abused force, he was to undergo it.

* Vie politique et privée de Santerre, p. 44.

† La Bastille dévoilée, 2re Livraison.

‡ Discours historique, de Dusanx, 1re partie, p. 346.

§ This picture was handed, on the 15th of July, to the assembly of the electors.

|| Vie politique et privée de Santerre, p. 46.

¶ Voyage à la Bastille, par Michel Cubières, p. 34.

** Hist. de la Révolution par deux amis de la liberté, t. 2. p. 35.

Mercy was demanded for him. Had he mercy on the poor prisoners when he hired out the small garden reserved for their promenades, when his avarice disputed with them for an hour of pure air, or of gay sunshine? To the effects of such language were added resentment for the recent treason of which they thought him guilty, and the certainty that if he escaped popular vengeance, he would remain unpunished. Thus the crowd multiplied against him, in proportion as it approached the Hotel de Ville, insults, invectives, and threats. Some pulled his hair, others struck him in the face with swords.* They thus reached the place de Grève. There, the clamors redoubling, the cortege is assailed on all sides. L'Epine, who endeavors to keep back the crowd, receives a violent blow; Legris had met unmoved the fire of the Bastille; he cannot sustain the sight around him and faints.† De Launey walked bareheaded, and he was thus recognized; Hullin takes off his hat, and places it on the head of the governor.‡ With a vigor which generosity centupled, Hullin defended the unfortunate man committed to his care, for a long time; but numbers finally overwhelm him, his strength abandons him, and exhausted and covered with blood, he falls upon a stone. Wine was given to him,§ and his consciousness returned. . . . When he rose up, there was no longer any one to protect.

It has been written, that de Launey preserved a suppliant attitude to the last; and words, in which resignation was mixed in a touching manner with prayer, have been lent to him. He displayed on the contrary a lofty courage; according to the testimony of the abbé Lefebvre, the only one that *saw his death*, who has related it, he died "defending himself like a lion;"|| we may believe that his firmness increased the indignation of the people, whom his prayers might perhaps have touched.

The head of the governor was carried about on the end of a pike; a frightful proof of the excessive resentment which long oppression amasses in the bosom of enslaved nations. There were to be yet, alas, other tragedies. Two invalides were hung to a lamp post, in front of the Hotel de Ville. The lieutenant Person was killed at the corn quay.¶ The adjutant Miray having reached the rue des Tornelles, in which he dwelt, and finding it deserted, had the imprudence to dismiss the escort which the French guards had given him; he was opening his door, when a group of armed men, turning from an adjoining street, recognized him, and killed him.** But an ever to be regretted death, was that of Major de Losme, the consoler of the prisoners, their support, their providence. The crowd, which unfortunately only knew his uniform, had surrounded him, not far from the Arcade Saint Jean. An old prisoner of the Bastille, named Pelleport, perceived him, and springs forward. "Stop, he is my benefactor." He is not heard. He seizes a gun, and now by blows, now by imprecations, he endeavored to divert the murderers from his friend, in order to turn their fury upon himself. "Noble young man, said the

* Hist. de la Revolution par deux amis de la liberté, p. 36. † Le Cousin Jacques, p. 79.

‡ L'Ami du Roi, etc., cahier 3, chap. 45, p. 115. § Le Cousin Jacques, p. 71.

|| Words of the abbé Lefebvre, related by Dusaulx to whom they were addressed. *Œuvre des sept jours*, p. 301.

¶ Procès-verbal de l'assemblée des électeurs, t. 1. p. 357.

** L'Ami du Roi, etc., cahier 3, chap. 46, p. 118.

unfortunate major to him, what are you doing, you will sacrifice yourself without saving me." De Losme fell dead, whilst they stretched his generous protector all bloody upon the steps of the Hotel de Ville.*

The bodies of de Losme, de Miray, de Person were carried to the Morgue; that of de Launey was not found. Six months afterwards, an unknown soldier carried to the family of the governor his trinkets and watch, from which a seal with his coat of arms hung, without explaining how he obtained them.†

What was passing during this time in the Hotel de Ville, into which the conquerors were about to enter? The permanent committee had been exposed to suspicions and threats all day. Their refusal to decree the capture of the Bastille had been imputed to them as treason. The multitude, whose waves unceasingly renewed, inundated the great hall, and appeared to have carried thither the noise of the tempest, were astonished, and indignant at finding the doors of the private room which the committee had reserved for themselves, closed. What were these invisible rulers, who governed like conspirators, about? Why so much mystery? They should deliberate in the great hall, under the eye of the people.

Couriers who had been stopped, were brought. The elector Bucheron demanded that the packages should be opened. They contained two letters, which were immediately read.

The first was as follows. "I send you, my dear du Puget, the order you thought necessary; you will forward it.—Paris, July 14th, 1789.—Signed, the Baron de Besenval."

The second enclosed in the same envelope, said, "Monsieur de Launey will hold out to the last extremity; I have sent him sufficient forces.—July 14th, 1789.—Signed, the Baron de Besenval."‡

The fury was then redoubled. They believed themselves on the eve of the most sinister perfidies. A young man entered furious, cleft his way through the crowd, and reached the bureau, where he uttered a shout which a thousand voices repeated with a terrible fury. "No private committee.§ We want no committee." An old man added, "Let us leave these traitors," and the commissioner Carré came in, saying that the Grève was in a rage.|| The committee was dissolved at once;|| the oligarchs of burgherism appeared in the great hall, and Flesselles mounted on the platform, on which the chair of the president stood, remained there, exposed to the distrustful looks of the multitude.

Such was then the aspect of the interior of the Hotel de Ville, when the taking of the Bastille was announced by an immense, prodigious clamor, one of those clamors, which among the ancients caused crows to fall into the circus. A mass of men of all ages soon arrives, packed together, groaning. "It was said that the Hotel de Ville was about to crumble beneath the mingled cries of victory and treason, vengeance and

* L'Ami du Roi, etc., cahier 3. p. 118 et 119.—Voyage à la Bastille, p. 32 et 33.

† Biographie Universelle, article de Launey, drawn up under the supervision of the Count d'Agay, one of the sons in law of M. de Launey.

‡ Mémoire de Bucheron, p. 8 et 9.

§ Procès-verbal de l'assemblée des électeurs, t. 1. p. 350.

¶ Mémoire de Bucheron, p. 9.

§ Ibid. p. 9.

liberty.* The pomp was savage, sublime. A bloody hand was raised in the midst of the crowd which waved the buckle of the stock of the governor; but by the side of this hideous trophy, a young workman showed on the point of his bayonet, the regulations of the Bastille, and Elie, crowned with laurels, was carried forward in the arms of his heroic companions.†

So long as Flesselles had not had to contemplate the image of death, he had remained calm, smiling, even imperious. Having been called upon by Francotay, one of the electors, to tell why he had obstinately refused to the citizens powder and arms, he had dared to reply, "Be silent."‡ But when he saw, as it were, the spectre of the governor of the Bastille, he became alarmed. The words, "treason, infamous manœuvres," were murmured around him. Full of trouble, he rose, saying, "Since I am suspected by my fellow-citizens, it is indispensable for me to retire;" and he wished to descend from the platform, but several retained him. "Sir," said an elector named Delapoize, "you will be responsible for the misfortunes which are about to happen. You have not yet given up the keys of the magazine of the city, in which the arms and especially the cannon are." Flesselles, without replying a word, drew the keys from his pocket and handed them to the elector.§ The paleness of his face showed that the provost of the merchants was alarmed, but he united manifestly a singular and profound concern of some kind with those fears.|| We have already quoted a fragment of a letter attributed to the Baron de Besenval and addressed to Madame Polignac: this letter contained the following; "I have been fortunate enough to substract important papers from the house of the provost. I might have saved his life, but I should have compromised Irla (the queen,) and I preferred that he should be the victim."¶ Had the provost of the merchants papers to compromise high persons? Did he fear lest his residence should be visited? It is certain, that when they talked of taking him to the Palais Royal, serenity returned to his countenance.** "Well, sirs," said he impressively, "let us go to the Palais Royal;" and without waiting the return of the Abbé Fauchet, who had gone to tranquillize the distrust of Saint Roch, he came down from the platform. We must remark, that "the people offered him no violence,"†† as he was passing through the hall. Having descended to the Place de Grève, he passed on through the midst of the crowd, and without experiencing any ill treatment,‡‡ as far as the corner of the quay Pelletier. Here an unknown person shot him dead with a pistol, either from barbarous impatience on the part of an enemy, or because by killing Flesselles, some one of his accomplices wished to destroy a formidable secret.

* These were the very expressions. See Procès-verbal, p. 355.

† Discours historique du Dusaulx, p. 360, 361, Procès-verbal, p. 355.

‡ Mémoires tirés des archives de la police, t. 4. chap. 57, p. 111.

§ Procès-verbal de l'assemblée des électeurs, t. 1. p. 360, 361.

|| L'Ami du Roi, etc., cahier 3, chap. 46. p. 165.

¶ Correspondance Secrète de plusieurs grands personages à la fin du 18e Siècle, p. 93.

** Mémoires tirés des archives de la police, t. 4, p. 114. The author was there, and his recital moreover is in almost all points like that of the Procès-verbal.

†† Copied verbatim from the Procès-verbal, p. 361. The author of the recital quoted above says, p. 114, "I affirm to this disposition of the crowd from having seen it."

‡‡ Procès-verbal de l'assemblée des électeurs, t. 1. p. 364.

There was a rumor that a note had been found on the provost of the merchants addressed to the governor of the Bastille; "Hold out; I am amusing the Parisians with promises and cockades." The truth is, no one could produce it; it did not make a part of the *procès-verbal*; as its existence was only affirmed by public rumor. But the words cited were none the less a faithful summary of the conduct of the provost of the merchants. He had amused the Parisians with cockades and promises; who gave him the order? It was this which the mystery of his death enveloped.

At almost the same hour the Prince and Princess de Montbarrey were dragged to the Hotel de Ville. The princess having fainted before the electors, she was carried into the saloon of the queen. Her husband, threatened on all sides, pushed against the bureau, bent double, was lost, if rising with vigor from the midst of the irritated crowd, the Marquis de la Salle had not placed him in a situation to justify himself; "My friends," said the old minister of war, "you deceive yourselves; you wish to punish me as an aristocrat, and I am one of the most zealous partisans of liberty . . . It is my son the Prince de Saint Maurice, who has brought about the revolution in Franche Comte."*

Applause carried it over plans of vengeance; and in proportion as the violent impressions of the combat were removed did generosity resume its sway. The French guards and Elie, whose attitude was constantly that of a man of the heroic times, demanded that the people should reward them for their services by exhibiting magnanimity. The defenders of the Bastille were there, pale and silent, and awaiting the fatal decree . . . Elie suddenly addressed himself to them. "Swear fidelity to the nation." All of them raising their hands, take the civic oath; they embrace them, they weep over them enthusiastically; they are saved.†

Led to the Palais Royal, the Swiss found there protectors as ardent, as ingenious. They were passed off before the eyes of the people assembled in the garden for captives wrested from the dungeons of the Bastille, for soldiers, who having refused to fire on their fellow-citizens, had been cruelly punished for their patriotic disobedience.‡ A collection was immediately made for them,§ and the multitude gathered around them in fraternal transports.

The night was now about to descend upon the city, but without bringing repose. Happy law of destiny! for the sleep of Paris at such a time would have been the sleep of the revolution. Thanks to heaven, mysterious emissaries traversed the different quarters, which they filled with alarm. According to them Paris was to be bombarded. They had seen the hillock of Montmartre covered with cannon and bombs and furnaces to heat balls; they could name the leaders; the co-operators in the abominable enterprise; the Prince de Condé, the Marshal de Broglie, Besenval, the Prince de Lambesc, the Prince de Narbonne Fritzlac, the Baron de Salkenayhn.|| Then, as during the night preceding the Saint

* *Procès-verbal de l'assemblée des électeurs*, t. 1. p. 365.

† *Discours historique*, de Dusaulx, p. 371 et 372.

‡ *Relation de la prise de la Bastille*, &c., p. 393.

§ *Lettre à M. le Marquis de Luchet*.

Bartholomew, unknown men went about, designating on the doors of houses, here a circle and there a cross.* All the windows having been furnished with lamps, voluntary sentinels cried out at the entrance of each street in a tone of piercing irony, "Look to your lamps; we have occasion to see very clearly to-night."† On the quay Pelletier, the play-actor Grammont said to the passers by, from the top of a post, "There are quarries under Paris. Be careful about powder. Visit the vaults." But the hero of this fierce vigilance was Marat. The capital, thus intoxicated with distrust, pleased him, and his revolutionary part began with a suspicion. A detachment of Hussars having advanced as far as the Pont Neuf, and the officer declaring that he came to fraternize with the people; "If that is true," said Marat to him in a brisk tone, "Give up your arms to us." The officer refused. Marat then placing himself at the head of a multitude whom his speeches inflamed, forced the Hussars to follow him to the Hotel de Ville, from whence they were dismissed under an escort.‡

Every thing concurred to keep up and increase the trouble, enthusiasm, courage and fury of the citizens. And to what a height would it have reached had they known, that during these hours of anguish, the court was preparing for the joys of its approaching triumph by sacrilegious rejoicings; that the fetes of the conquered country had been celebrated in the Orangery at Versailles before the eyes and amidst the plaudits of the queen, the Count d'Artois and the Polignacs; that there had been dancing and singing and wine distributed profusely to a foreign soldiery;§ and that they had finally equalled in inhuman insolence those Roman emperors, who counted the calamities of Rome among their pleasures.

Paris was yet ignorant of this, but the criminal presumption of the courtiers was too well known. There was no relaxation in making pikes and casting balls. They had countersigns, as in camp; in the faubourg Saint-Marceau, *libertas*; else where, *Washington*. Ditches four feet deep were dug before the barriers to arrest cavalry. Not only were paving stones carried to the tops of houses to crush the assailants, but valuable furniture, statues, bronze ornaments, even books.|| Children aided in the erection of the barricades. The women animated them to the strife. Several millions of men rising together to heroism, in consequence of wishing for liberty. . . . History had never offered a more superb sight. Thus the Revolution exhibited its power from the very first, and those whom it inspired might have already been enabled to make that great speech, which a representative of the people afterwards made in the midst of the tempests; "The throne of God even would have been shaken, could our decrees have reached it."

* L'Ami du Roi, etc., cahier 3, chap. 48, p. 142.

† Lettre à M. le Marquis de Luchet.

‡ L'Ami du Roi, etc., cahier 3, chap. 48, p. 141.

§ Mémoires de Ferrières, a royalist writer, t. 1. p. 132.

|| "My wife and children dismantled my library," etc. Cousin Jacques, p. 97.

CHAPTER XII.

LOUIS THE SIXTEENTH, THE KING OF BURGERISM.

The night of the 14th of July, 1789, at Versailles—The session of the 15th of July—Secret dispositions of the Assembly—Scenes in the Marble Court—Aspect of armed Paris—Journey of Louis the Sixteenth to Paris—Views of the principal leaders of Burgerism—Marie Antoinette left at Versailles—Louis the Sixteenth in the great hall of the Hotel de Ville—He is consecrated King of Burgerism—True character of the 17th of July, 1789.

THE 14th of July 1789, was an anxious day at Versailles. News, vague, but on that very account the more alarming, had thrown consternation among the representatives of burgerism, who, fearing the court, fearing the people, thought themselves on the eve of an irreparable catastrophe. They knew that the body guard had not drawn off their boots for several days, and that the weakness of the king had finally been hurried on to the path of extreme violence; they had heard on that very day the barbarian songs which came from the terrace of the Orangery. On the other hand, what could they imagine more terrible than the despair of Paris in insurrection? They thought they heard the noise of cannon; they listened with their ears to the earth. The Viscount de Noailles arrived suddenly from Paris. All rose attentive. He, deeply agitated, shows them the capital in arms, the hotel of the Invalides invaded, the noble families making fortresses of their dwellings, the people around the Bastille, the Bastille conquered.* All discussion immediately ceasing, it was determined, that a deputation should be sent to the king;† for burgerism always covered itself with the royalty, when the people grumbled.

Louis the Sixteenth received the deputation in the hall of entrance to his cabinet. It was about ten o'clock at night. The archbishop of Vienne being unable to read by candle light, the Count de Clermont-Tonnerre read the address of the assembly. Whilst it was reading the king kept his eyes fixed steadily on Mirabeau.‡ All the ministers were present. Clermont-Tonnerre having finished, Louis the Sixteenth replied in a cold tone, that he felt disposed to yield to the wishes of the inhabitants of Paris, and adding that he was about to confer with his council, he entered his cabinet. The curtains being badly closed permitted the deputies to see through the large Bohemian glasses of the windows, the pantomime of the princes and ministers; the play of their countenances appeared to betray sinister designs.§ In fact, after waiting for half an hour, they obtained only an equivocal assurance from the king of the part he took in the anxieties of the assembly. "Informed," he said, "of the formation of a bourgeois guard, I have given orders to

* *Moniteur*, Session of the 14th of July, 5 o'clock in the evening.

† *Le Point de Jour*, No. 25, p. 200.

‡ *Mémoires de Barrère*, p. 222. (Brussels, 1842.)

§ *Ibid.* p. 223.

general officers to place themselves at the head of this guard, to aid it with their experience, and to second the zeal of the good citizens; I have also ordered the troops which are in the Champ de Mars to leave Paris.”*

Such language was not calculated to tranquilize their minds. Besides, in the interval, the electors sent by the Hotel de Ville, had heightened the alarm of the assembly, by relating to it the mishaps which had occurred in the environs of the Bastille, the inutility of negotiations, the death of several citizens from the fire of the fortress, the demand made by the multitude to decree its siege;† it was determined to send a second deputation.

Louis the Sixteenth replied; “You rend my heart more and more by your recital of the misfortunes of Paris. It is impossible to believe that the orders I have given the troops are the cause of it. I have no change to make in the reply I have made to you.”‡

How can we describe the grief and alarm of the assembly, especially when the Baron de Wimpfen, having come from Paris, informed them that he had seen the dead body of a headless man on the place de Grève,§ which he was assured was that of the governor of the Bastille. Singular contrast! Whilst the people of Paris were celebrating their victory by an illumination,|| the representatives of burgherism at Versailles were penetrated with profound grief.¶ The overthrow of a hateful fortress, the prodigious outburst with which the patriotism of the crowd commenced, they called only *the misfortunes of the capital*.** They could not think of the Bastille conquered, without picturing to themselves the burning of the barriers, the scenes which had reddened the pavement of the faubourg Saint Antoine, the encampment of troops under the trees of the Champs Elysées, the irritated people hastening through Paris in flames. Until then the court had been their most formidable adversary, now it was the multitude which most alarmed their imagination; they changed alarms. Their looks were turned unceasingly towards the royalty, and it was proposed to send a third deputation to the chateau; it was then that Clermont Tonnerre used those celebrated words; “Give them the night for counsel; kings must buy their experience like other men.”

The plans of the government were moreover but half enveloped in mystery. Whilst the people agitated by a fierce anxiety were silently surrounding the Hall of the States, the Place of Arms, the Courts of the Chateau were filled with hussars, whose attitude allowed plots of force to be feared, and proscriptions to be suspected. The session being to last all night under the vice-presidency of Lafayette, some old men had spread carpets upon the tables, seeking on them for an hour of

* Dix-neuvième lettre du comte de Mirabeau à ses commettants.

† Moniteur, night session of the 14th of July.

‡ Ibid. Dix-neuvième lettre du comte de Mirabeau à ses commettants.

§ Moniteur, session of the 14th of July.

|| Prud'homme, Révolutions de Paris, No. 1. p. 19.

¶ Le Point de Jour, No. 25.

** Le Courrier de Provence. Le Point de Jour.

repose,* but the majority, though worn down with fatigue, watched with anxiety for what to-morrow was to produce.

Louis the Sixteenth slept. What were his dreams? The court, though well informed, had contradicted the news carried to the king by the deputations from the assembly;† and Louis the Sixteenth had retired to his apartment in ignorance. But the Duke de Liancourt, whose post gave him ingress to the monarch at all hours, awoke him to inform him of the events of the day. It is known what were the first words exchanged: "It is an émeute." "No, Sire, it is a revolution." The duke who was a sincere friend, painted to the king the dangers which surrounded his person and family; he spoke to him of the doubtful fidelity of the troops, of the formidable progress of the public mind, of the necessity of meeting the nation. The brothers of the king suddenly entered. The duke going up to the Count d'Artois, said to him, "Prince, your head is proscribed; I have read the placard of that proscription."‡ The Counts d'Artois and Provence joined their urgencies to that of the Duke de Liancourt, and the king promised to go to the assembly.

The session, which had been resumed at eight o'clock the next day, found the assembly animated by a single desire, that of having an understanding with the king. Custine, Sillery, Pison du Galant, De Marguerites, read plans of addresses, made speeches, in which reappeared under various forms the feeling to which the middle classes attached at that period, as now, the badly dissimulated hope of their sway.—"The French adore their king, provided they are not constrained to fear him."§ Thus the throne was but a covering for the third estate, the monarchy but a buckler. One curious fact which it is well to show was, that Bailly was secretly requested to compose the speech the assembly desired to hear from the mouth of Louis the Sixteenth. Bailly did not reject this honor, so singular under the circumstances; he prepared the royal speech, but his work was not adopted.||

It had been decided that a third deputation should go to Louis the Sixteenth to require the removal of the troops and the dismissal of the ministers. Mirabeau then rises and in the full tide of his eloquence dictates these terms as the language they must hold to the prince.¶

"Tell him that the foreign hordes by which we are invested were yesterday visited by princes, princesses, male and female favorites, and received from them exhortations, caresses and presents; tell him that during the whole night these foreign satellites, gorged with gold and wine, have predicted in their impious songs the slavery of France and that their brutal wishes invoked the destruction of the National Assembly,—tell him that even in his palace the courtiers have mingled their dances with the sound of this barbarous music, and that such was

* Dix-neuvieme lettre du Comte de Mirabeau à ses commettants.

† The second deputation had carried to the king the account of the siege of the Bastille. Mémoires de Ferrières.

‡ Mémoires de Ferrières.

§ A remarkable phrase in the plan of Sillery.

|| Mémoires de Bailly, t. 2. p. 5.

¶ Dix-neuvieme lettre du Comte de Mirabeau à ses commettants.

the scene which preceded the Saint Bartholomew; tell him that that Henry whose memory the world blesses, he of his ancestors whom he was desirous of taking as his model, sent provisions into revolted Paris which he was besieging in person, whilst his fierce counsellors had driven off the meal which commerce was carrying into faithful and starved Paris."

As the deputation was about to depart, the Duke de Liancourt announced that the king was coming. What should be the countenance of the assembly? Should they greet the monarch with cries of love, before knowing the feelings of his heart—when blood was flowing in Paris? The dignity of silence was proposed.

At the very moment that the Bishop of Chartres* was recalling those words of the Bishop of Senes, "The silence of the people, is the lesson of kings," the doors were opened and the king appeared. He was without guards and accompanied only by his two brothers. He advanced some paces, remained standing uncovered, and said with emotion :—

"Messieurs, I have assembled you to consult you on affairs of state; there is nothing more urgent and which affects my heart more sensibly than the frightful disorders which reign in the capital. I know that unjust prejudices have been set on foot; that they have dared to publish that your persons were not in safety; would it be necessary to reassure you as to such culpable reports, belied in advance by my character? . . . Well, I am with the nation, I confide myself to you." He added that he had given orders to the troops to remove from Paris and Versailles.

The attitude of the assembly was instantly changed. The hall resounded with acclamations, which were a signal for the immense crowd that awaited without. The Archbishop of Vienne replied, and in a speech in which firmness was skilfully mingled with respect, he concealed under flattering forms an imperious demand for the recall of Necker.

A characteristic movement marked the departure of Louis the Sixteenth. The deputies taking each other's hands formed a chain intended to guard him against the waves of the multitude. The shouts of enthusiasm recommenced at this sight. This was the last fine day of Louis the Sixteenth. Under the rays of a mid-day sun, and before the look of a crowd which in order to see him, clambered on gates and grouped themselves on statues, he traversed slowly on foot to the sound of trumpets, the long passage from the hall of the States to the Court of Marble.†

Still the people felt deep distrust at the bottom, and the *Vive le Roi* on that day even, were not enthusiastic. A woman of Versailles having roughly brushed by the Count d'Artois, approached the king and said to him, "Ah, my king, are you sincere? will you not change as you did fifteen days ago?"‡ "No," replied the king, "I will never change." This episode was the important event of the day. It was lost, borne

* According to Ferrières, t. 1. p. 240—for according to Bailly, these words were used by Mirabeau. Mémoires de Bailly, t. 2. p. 4.

† Dix Neuvieme lettre du Comte de Mirabeau à ses commettants.

‡ Le Point de Jour, No. 25.

§ Le Cousin Jacques, p. 106.

away in the noise of the triumph. The queen wanted her share of the applause; she advanced on the great balcony, carrying the dauphin in her arms, as if to confide the cause of royalty to the hearts of mothers, but threatening rumors then rose among the shouts of joy. A lady of the palace having been recognized at the foot of the chateau, she was loaded with insulting messages. "Why," asked some cruelly ironical voices, "why does not the Duchess de Polignac show herself with her friend?" With a hand extended towards a window, an unknown person exclaimed, "Lo, where is placed that throne, whose vestiges you will seek for soon."*

Paris was a cause of anxiety to the assembly; it did not despair of gaining it for Louis the Sixteenth. A numerous deputation, of whom Lafayette, Mounier, Bailly, Siéyes, Lally-Tollendal, Talleyrand, Barrère were a part, was commissioned to relate to the Parisians the steps of the king, the applauded peace, the touching scenes of the Court of Marble. The body guard offered to escort the envoys of that other sovereign, the assembly; but it was thought that such a train was not suitable for the representatives of the nation, the messengers of peace; the guards were kindly thanked, and the passage was made between two files of people running by the sides of the vehicles.†

Paris was at that moment in all the restlessness of its recent victory. The streets were alive. The barriers were closed, being guarded by popular vigilance.‡ The faubourgs cut up by barricades, the great outlets with their pavements torn up and garnished with cannon, nearly eighty thousand men under arms,§ the march of vigilant patrols gave to the capital an aspect at once sad and imposing. The approaching return of the troops of Besenval, who had fallen back on Sevrès during the evening, was credited; it was remembered that the court had an army at their disposal five leagues from Paris; it was not feared, but preparations were made to receive it. During this time an almost chance union at the Hotel de Ville of merchants, advocates, physicians and men of letters exercised absolute power through the force of audacity, restrained the ardors of the Grève, employed themselves with the arrival of corn, with imposing discipline on disorder, appearing to forget the absent monarchy, the mute tribunals, the banished intendant, all the old powers struck with stupor or death.

At the entrance of Paris, the deputies were strongly impressed by the unexpected sight which awaited them. Thousands of citizens were expecting them, brandishing pikes, a new arms, long unknown in France, which were easy to make and seize, and suitable for revolutions which require war to be improvised. This forest of pikes, a shaking image, presented a remembrance of those old combats for liberty, and recalled, before the palace of a king, the terrible fasces of consular times. As a surprising contrast, an hundred thousand men mingled the flame of enthusiasm with the preparation for defiance, and the varied colors of a young

* Mémoires de Madame Campan, t. 2. p. 48, 49.

† Le Point de Jour, No. 26, p. 307.

‡ Process-verbal de l'assemblée des électeurs, t. 1. p. 294.

§ Annales Parisiennes, No. 1. p. 10.

soldiery, with the subordination of a disciplined troop.* They wore the strange, severe costume of the civil wars, but under the equipment of a recruit beat the heart of a citizen. Having reached the place Louis the Fifteenth, the deputies descended, crossed the garden of the Thuilleries, and were received, under the vestibule of the palace, by four persons of a very careless exterior, the abbé Fauchet, Legrand de Saint-René, de Leutre, Duveyrier. They were the envoys of the permanent committee of the Hotel de Ville, who, in the dusty garments of the evening, came to do the honors of the insurrection to the national assembly. Chosen from the event, the usurpers of the vacant authority, they managed it for two days with skilful energy, commanded the soldiery, appointed to employments, gave orders. The sixteen deputies went to the Hotel de Ville, preceded by the four electors, amidst the acclamations of a numberless crowd: "all arms were extended towards them; flowers fell upon them from all the windows; all eyes were filled with tears."†

In the midst of so much intoxication, only one thought occupied the leaders of burgerism; to remind all that there was a king; for they were beginning to forget it. The Marquis de Lafayette was the first to speak in the great hall of the Hotel de Ville. After a rapid narration of the events of the morning, he exclaimed, "The king has been deceived; he is so no longer; he knows our misfortunes, and he only knows them to prevent their ever happening again." Then came Lally Tollendal, a skilful, elegant and persuasive orator, who knew how to lend the language of feeling to calculation. He feigned to admire the good order of the Parisians, in order not to have to counsel them to it; he boasted of the generosity of the king of the French, of the goodness of a prince who had said, "I confide myself to you;" he easily moved their hearts. The emotion even was so deep, that he was crowned with flowers. He was then led to a window to be shown to the spectators, who covered the place de Grève. Some remarked on the vicissitudes of fortune, which caused Lally Tollendal to be applauded on the place, on which the scaffold of his father had been erected; but the crowd were ignorant that their clamors avenged a punishment.

The armed citizens were yet to be directed. He whom the electors designated was proposed to them as their chief, the Marquis de Lafayette. His bust, which the State of Virginia had presented to the city of Paris, was exposed to the looks of all by the side of that of Washington, in that very hall of the Hotel de Ville, the theatre of so many changing scenes. On that very morning, whilst the electors were talking of replacing the Duke d'Aumont, who had refused the command of the Parisian soldiery, Moreau de Saint Mery had pointed with his finger to the bust of Lafayette without speaking, and at this gesture, all the electors had united their voices upon the companion in arms of the Americans.‡ The choice was here confirmed by acclamation, and Lafayette replied to it, by saluting them with his sword. Who should be given as a successor to the provost of the merchants? Bailly was designated. But the cry was heard; *No*

* Le Point du Jour, No. 25.

† Procès-verbal de l'assemblée des électeurs, t. 1. p. 446.

‡ Ibid. t. 1. p. 423.

*more provosts of the merchants. Mayor of Paris,** the standers by repeated, "Yes, mayor of Paris," and a crown appeared immediately on the head of the modest Bailly, which the hand of the Archbishop of Paris kept there.† This prelate, desirous of associating himself in the honors of so pleasant a popularity, induced the assembly to go to Notre Dame, thus turning the impressions of this memorable day to the advantage of the church.

The victorious people had willingly forgotten a monarchy which did not show itself; but it was necessary for burgherism to recall its living image. It trembled, lest the triumph of the faubourgs should develop itself, until it became anarchy; it feared in all cases for its own rule, and the less the people feared, the more was it alarmed for them. In Versailles, in the midst of the Swiss, the Hungarian horse, the dragoons of Besenval, royalty had no longer but one prestige, in the eyes of the crowd, that of the sword; but in the eyes of the proprietors, the king remained the supreme head of order; behind the representative of the force which tyrannizes, they sought, they desired to save, even to render popular the representative of the force which preserves. The Bastille was taken; what was better for this than to conduct Louis the Sixteenth among the Parisians, so that he should have the appearance of subscribing to his own defeat, of accepting it nobly, of placing the royal seal to it? Weak prince who went to aid, when conquered, in the arrangements made after the victory.

On returning to Versailles, the deputies of the national assembly affirmed that the capital was very desirous to see the king. Bailly spoke of it, on the 16th, to Vicq d'Azir, the physician to the queen; and at eight o'clock in the evening, he was sent for to the *Ceil-de-Bœuf*. The new mayor of Paris found the Chateau full of people, the courtiers alarmed, the king curious to know the state of Paris, and disposed to go there, when Bailly expressed to him a wish for it. Louis the Sixteenth said of the governor of the Bastille, "He well deserved his fate."‡ It was to condemn the unfortunate De Launey to death a second time. In serving kings, we must gain the hatred of the people if we succeed, the hatred of the master if we fail, and frequently both.

In the assembly, the dismissal of the ministers declared inseparable from the recall of Necker,§ was the object of deliberations which were interrupted by successive messages, announcing the dismissal of Barentin, of the Marshal de Broglie, of Villedenil, when finally the king forestalling the advice of the assembly, sent it a letter which recalled Necker. The letter was unsealed, as if the monarch feared the insufficiency of his kingly word. Sensible to such a deference, the members of the assembly sent to thank Louis the Sixteenth, and determined also to write to Necker. The letter was immediately drawn up, and it were these words, in which the flattering pen of Lally Tollendal was immediately recognized, and which placed the dignity of a great people at the feet of a man. "Sir, the national assembly presses you to yield to the desire of his majesty. Your talents and your virtues cannot receive a more glorious recompense,

* *Procès-verbal de l'assemblée des électeurs*, t. 1. p. 460.

† *Ibid.* p. 461.

‡ *Mémoires de Bailly*, t. 2. p. 42.

§ *Le Point du Jour*, No. 26.

nor a more powerful encouragement. You will justify our confidence, you will not prefer your own tranquillity to that of the public. The nation, its king, and its representatives await you.”*

A message from the prince informed the assembly that Louis the Sixteenth would go to Paris on the next day. Before determining upon a step so full of danger, and which was to be in the phrase of Necker, a pompous description of the fall or the settling down of the royal authority,† Louis the Sixteenth had held a council. Some conjured him to leave Versailles, put himself at the head of his troops, and encamp the monarchy in some other part of his kingdom; others advised him to carry tranquillity to Paris. Marie Antoinette opposed the last plan with extreme vivacity; when she found it was adopted, she took all her diamond ornaments from her jewel boxes, placed them in a small trunk she had taken to her carriage,‡ and assisted Madame Campan in burning a quantity of papers. Louis the Sixteenth heard mass and received the communion, as if he were going to his death, and handed to his brother, the Count de Provence, a writing, which appointed him lieutenant-general of the kingdom.§

Louis the Sixteenth started on the morning of the 17th of July, accompanied by the Marshal de Beauvau and the Dukes de Villeroy and de Villequier. He took also in his carriage two popular great lords, the Count d’Estaing and the Marquis de Nesle. The assembly had decreed the evening before, that two hundred and forty members should join themselves to the king, less to do him honor than serve as a rampart for him;|| but he incapable of understanding how ardently burgerism desired him to live, and that he was a necessary phantom to them, advanced towards Paris with a heart deeply troubled. Though his countenance was calm, an indomitable anxiety altered his countenance. The horses going on a walk, the journey was very tedious. The peasants of the neighboring villages were hurrying in from all quarters, armed with scythes or pitchforks, and they mingled with the escort, which consisted as far as Sevres of the militia of Versailles, and from thence of the militia of Paris; for the king had dismissed from him his body guard, not daring to insult the Parisians by appearing alarmed.

During this time, shut up in the palace which her terror peopled with dismal images, Marie Antoinette was abandoning herself to despair. She already saw the king surrounded, detained as an hostage, perhaps slain. With a trembling hand she wrote a speech which she commenced reciting whilst walking about in a convulsive agitation. If the king did not return, she would go straight to the States General and show them her children as Marie Therese did to the Hungarians, and she would address this speech to them, the first sentence of which she repeated in the midst of her sobs, “Sir, I come to place the wife and children of your sovereign under your protection; you will not suffer that which

* *Moniteur*, Session of the 16th of July, 1789.

† Necker, *de la révolution française*, t. 1. 2e. partie.

‡ *Mémoires de Madame Campan*, t. 2. p. 31.

§ Beauchamp, *vie de Louis 18th*, quoted by Labaume, t. 3. p. 257.

|| *Mémoires de Bailly*, t. 2. p. 45.

has been united in heaven to be disunited on earth.”* The chateau of Versailles was silent, deserted; the courtiers had fled. The queen having sent to seek the members of her household, the friends of the preceding evening, padlocks were found on their doors.†

Having been informed during the night that the king was coming to the Hotel de Ville, the permanent committee of electors had sent orders to all the districts, and from eight o'clock in the morning, an hundred and fifty thousand armed citizens,‡ ranged in double file, covered the line which extends from the place de Grève to the barrier, of Passy. The king did not reach the gates until three o'clock, under a cloudy sky§ and with a countenance impressed with melancholy. His sadness was increased when he saw that long avenue of new soldiers, soldiers who called themselves citizens; when he saw those flags of blue, red and white silk, which glittered for the first time;|| when he looked over that immense people, adorned with unknown cockades, and who did not utter the usual cries at the sight of their sovereign. Bailly on handing to him the keys of the city on a vermillion colored basin, made a few remarks to him, which were strongly characteristic of the situation. “Sire, I bring to your majesty the keys of your good city of Paris. They are the same which were presented to Henry the Fourth. He had reconquered his people, now the people have reconquered their king.”¶ Rude words, which however were perfectly justified by the march of Louis the Sixteenth through his armed capital. Leaning against the bar of his carriage, he threw his astonished looks to the right and left; he listened to the silence of the multitude, which the cry of “*vive la nation*” alone interrupted at intervals.** Before him rolled two cannon taken at the Bastille and the Invalides.†† The French guards, become the guards of the people, dragged them. Thus preceded by those glorious deserters, whose protection was an insult to him, thus surrounded by the members of the assembly and the militia of burgherism, Louis the Sixteenth resembled those kings of Asia, with whom the Romans adorned their triumphs.

The king when passing the Pont du Neuf, might have been pleasantly reassured by the sight of the bouquets of flowers which the women of the people had placed in the muzzles and touch-holes of the cannon,‡‡ a charming idea, which converted a menace of war into a symbol of love; but at the place de Grève he had to contemplate a strange ceremony. Most of the revolutionists, we have said, were affiliated with the secret societies of free-masonry. Now when a foreign brother presents himself as a visitor at a lodge, if he is clothed with the high grades, the members of the lodge range themselves on his passage, and form what is called the *vault of steel*. This singular honor was rendered to Louis the Sixteenth,

* Mémoires de Madame Campan, t. 2. p. 37.

† Ibid.

‡ Lettre à M. le Marquis de Luchet.

§ L'Ami du Roi, etc., Cahier 4. chap. 54. p. 36.

|| Lettre à M. le Marquis de Luchet.

¶ See in Mémoires de Bailly, t. 2. p. 69, the history of this celebrated sentence.

** L'Ami du Roi, etc., Cahier 4. chap. 54. p. 39.

†† Mémoires de Weber, t. 1. p. 398.

‡‡ Hist. de la révolution par deux amis de la liberté, t. 2. p. 105.

the moment he set his foot on the ground to mount the steps of the Hotel de Ville. He advances with a firm step beneath this cradle of crossed blades, and enters the great hall in the midst of applause. There he had to listen, seated on his throne, to the statement of the labors of the commune; there he had to give the approval of silence to the formation of the bourgeois militia, to the order to demolish the Bastille, to the appointments of Lafayette and Bailly; and there finally Moreau de Saint Méry, in a flattering discourse, addressed to him this language of a free man,* "You owed your crown to your birth, you now owe it only to your virtues."

The end of the principal leaders of ~~burgherism~~ ^{burgherism}, of Mounier and Lally Tollendal, was not yet attained. They had conceived the bold hope of making the very successes of democracy do homage to the monarchical principle. Ethis de Corny, the old companion of Lafayette in America, proposed then the erection of a monument to Louis the Sixteenth, the *regenerator of French liberty*,† and that upon the place where the Bastille stood. An unjust apotheosis, a derisory tribute of gratitude, which tended to unrobe the merit of the victory from the conquerors, in order to deck the conquered with it. Twice Louis the Sixteenth wished to speak, and twice the words hung suspended on his looks, either because he felt himself humbled by an enthusiasm of which he was the puppet rather than the object, or because the emotions of the day had dried up the sources of thought in him. But Lally Tollendal did not fail to supply the insufficiency of the monarch. He said to the people, showing them the prince, "Behold the king whom you desired so ardently to see among you;" he said to the prince, showing him the people, "Behold the people who have been calumniated, and who love you."‡ Bailly having then presented a cockade§ to the king, he took it and fastened it in his hat, and then advanced towards a window of the Hotel de Ville. An impatient multitude covered the place de Grève. On perceiving in the hat which Louis the Sixteenth waved, a cockade such as a king of France had never worn, the people broke out in burning transports; but what they saluted was not the personification of royalty, it was the colors of the insurrection.

Such was the 17th of July, 1789. A consecration took place in it which effaced that of Reims. The feudal sovereignty had disappeared; there was now in France only a monarchical chief of the bourgeois. Some thought the revolution terminated. . . . Terminated when all Paris was quivering, when the exaltation had reached such a point that cockades glittered, fastened to the stole, that capuchins carried guns, that young girls held the sword.|| No, no; once excited, the sea is not so easy to restrain. A secret foreboding, doubtless, warned Louis the Sixteenth of this, for his countenance did not cheer up, until having

* A manuscript letter of Robespierre, being a part of the collection entrusted to us. This letter has no date, but was evidently written on the 23d of July, since Robespierre mentions in it the death of Foulon, as having happened on the eve of the 22d of July, 1789. † Mémoires de Lally Tollendal, p. 76.

‡ L'Ami du Roi, etc., Cahier 4. chap. 54. p. 43.

§ Ibid. p. 43.

|| Manuscript letter from Robespierre, cited above. He was one of the deputation who accompanied the king.

escaped from the orations of the capital, and reached Sevres, he recognized his body guard upon the mountain.

On the news of this unhoped for return, Marie Antoinette hastened to throw herself into the arms of the king; but perceiving the revolutionary cockade in his hat, she recoiled as humbled as surprised, and proudly and contemptuously said,* "I did not know that I had married a plebeian."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FIRST EMIGRATION.

The Princess Adelaide and the Queen—Nocturnal departure of the Polignac family—Departure of the Princes; secret flight of the Count d'Artois—Isolation of Louis the Sixteenth—Effect produced by the first Emigration—Attempt at Regicide—Calumnious imputations—History of Dubois—The part of the Duke of Orleans after the 14th of July—Part of the Count de Provence.

THE taking of the Bastille produced the singular effect of making Louis the Sixteenth the king of burgherism; one circumstance powerfully favored this result; it was the first emigration.

During the night of the 16th and 17th of July, Madame de Polignac, disguised as a chambermaid, mounted up on the front of a berlin which was about to carry her far from France. Why this precipitate departure? Why these mysterious preparations? We have told what tender friendship united the queen to Madame de Polignac. This friendship, though it had not been always unclouded, had been strengthened by a long community of grief; but public opinion was too much irritated for Marie Antoinette not to be compelled, sooner or later, to renounce the enchantment of her life, which was at once the most bitter and the pleasantest. After the 14th of July, Madame Adelaide, the oldest of the king's aunts, had approached the queen;† she represented to her that the hour for sacrifices had come; that the presence of the duchess at court would be hereafter dangerous; that they were entering upon dark days, in which great affections had need of great courage. Sustained by the Baron de Besenval,‡ who did not think that the voluntary exile of the favorite was indispensable, Marie Antoinette at first rejected the idea of a separation for which her friend was not prepared; but there was no difficulty in alarming her about the fate of her who was so dear to her, and she even urged her to instant flight. The watch kept over the princes was already so active and imperious, that Marie Antoinette dared not assist at the departure of her friend.§ She wrote her this note, which

* Mercier, *Nouveau Paris*, t. 2. chap. 68, p. 169.

† *Correspondance secrète de plusieurs grands personnages illustres à la fin du 18e. Siecle*, p. 107.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 102.

§ *Mémoires de Madame Campan*, t. 2. chap. 14. p. 53.

reveals the trouble of a torn heart: "Adieu, most tender of friends. How frightful is this word, but it is necessary. Adieu. I have only strength to embrace you."* Strange misery of high station! This queen, who the eve before, found France too small for her pride, the monarchy with the laws too confined for her desires, was now reduced to the cares of clandestine despair, and the humiliation of concealing her tears.

The Duke and Duchess de Polignac, their daughter, the Duchess de Guiche, the Countess Diana, the Abbé de Balivière, all went together, going towards Switzerland, and trembling lest they should be recognized. They avoided this danger, but the shout of hatred which they had excited, pursued them in their *incognito* to the frontiers. They heard questions asked around their carriage, if the Polignacs were still about the queen.†

Other persons, more elevated if not more important, left Versailles and France at the same time. These were, in addition to the ministers of the abortive stroke of state policy, the Prince de Condé, the Duke de Bourbon, the Duke d'Enghien, the Prince de Conti, and finally, Louis the Sixteenth's own brother, the Count d'Artois. This last, who was afraid of his threatened life, escaped from the palace like a criminal stealing away from justice. He started at the break of day,‡ the better to deceive the vigilance of the people. Having passed silently through the sleeping city, he joined the regiment which was to protect his flight. He thought himself exposed to such terrible enmities, that he had his carriage escorted for some distance by two pieces of cannon.§ He went to Turin.

The very steps of the throne, we see, gave the signal for the emigration. It was princes of the blood who were the first to dare to warn Europe that the regeneration of France was fatal to them, and that that was not their country in which liberty appeared.

Louis the Sixteenth remained then alone in his deserted palace, and one stroke will suffice to paint the situation in which such an abandonment left him. When his servants saw him in this solitary condition, they so far lost their respect, that Besenval saw one of them one day reading over his shoulder as he was writing.|| There were no more plots and menacing fetes; but instead of these were apartments closed for ever, mute halls, soldiers of a doubtful fidelity consulting together at the doors, a queen sighing apart, and valets become insolent around an abandoned monarch.

The conduct of the princes was differently judged by the royalists. Those applauded it, who, violently irritated by the concessions of Louis the Sixteenth, were beginning to turn all their hopes towards the kings of Europe. But there were others by the side of these blind approvers of emigration, who regarded it as a felony. What! when the throne required defence more than ever, was it to be left exposed to the blows

* Mémoires de Weber, t. 1. chap. 4. p. 397.

† Mémoires de Madame Campan, t. 2. chap. 14. 56.

‡ Mémoires de Weber, t. 1. chap. 4. p. 394.

§ Ibid. p. 395.

|| Mémoires des Besenval, t. 2. p. 368.

§ Ibid. p. 395.

of its enemies? How was devotion to be required from subalterns, when the members of the royal family, the leaders of the nobility did not hesitate to set the example of desertion? If it were true that the tempest was inevitable, honor commanded that they should not persuade themselves of it too soon. Was it moreover less dangerous to fly than to fight?

The matter was not confined to these remarks, and extraordinary suspicions and an imputation of immense and formidable gravity were joined to them. It was first spoken of mysteriously, in a low voice; few scruples were soon exhibited about it, and finally the license of the times aiding the audacity of enmities, it was despoiled of all restraint. Among the accusations to which civil discords give birth, many are condemned to forgetfulness in advance; but that of which we speak found too many credulous minds; it characterizes too well the distrust, which the faction of the intractable royalists inspired in the partisans of Louis the Sixteenth; in a word, it has remained too much in the recollections of certain families to allow us to pass it by in silence.

Several royalist accounts* and a manuscript whose author had the account he has related from a friend of the Count d'Estaing, with whom he was a prisoner in the Conciergerie,† agree in presenting the following with some variation in the accessory circumstances.

The fanatics of the counter revolution regarded the king himself as one of their greatest embarrassments. Every thing about him was an obstacle to them, and appeared to be fatal to them; his repugnance to adopt extreme measures, his doubts, his short turns, the vulgar impress which he stamped on the royal majesty, his inclination to listen to distant rumors of popularity, his impotence to be the true head of the high nobility. Still, in the soul of many, discontent strove against a remains of respect, the fruit of a monarchical education. But the disaffection of some knew no bounds, because their fears did not.

It was in the midst of these badly dissimulated apprehensions, that the Count d'Estaing got wind of a frightful plot. It had been determined that Louis the Sixteenth should be assassinated at a certain hour of the night, and that it was a great person who was to conduct the assassin. His first emotion was that of incredulity, but the story was insisted on and he could neither be silent nor refrain. He went to Louis the Sixteenth, informed him of what was to happen, and asked for instant authority to pass the night in the first ante-chamber. Louis the Sixteenth consented to it, without putting faith in the reality of the dangers which disturbed the zeal of the loyal warrior.

Darkness and silence had in the mean time fallen upon the chateau; Louis the Sixteenth went to bed at his usual hour, and the Count d'Estaing, established at his post, was reflecting sadly on the consequences, when a noise of steps and low voices was suddenly heard. Louis the Sixteenth was sleeping profoundly. Awakened by his faithful guardian,

* And a pamphlet of eight pages, which, judging from appearances, was put out by the Orleanist party, for it finishes with these words, "When shall we then no longer praise only princes worthy of our love, respect and praises, such as our august monarch, and his illustrious relative Monseigneur, the Duke of Orleans?"

† Manuscript of M. Sauquaire-Souliné.

he remains for a moment as if stupified; then transported by anger and pale with indignation, he rises impetuously, thrusts aside the count, who endeavors in vain to restrain him, and hastens to the door, which he opens himself with violence.

This sudden apparition, this unexpected violence, the presence of the Count d'Estaing caused the plot to fail. It is added that a stranger armed with a dagger was seized in the palace, that he avowed the projected crime, and that he was secretly gotten rid of, in order either to stop too important revelations, or to avoid an eclat, whose consequences it would be difficult to foresee.

To declare the recital of this hateful attempt, notwithstanding the serious testimony on which it reposes, unlike the truth, would be to forget that the annals of courts are filled with such acts; we must be ignorant that nothing is impossible to the phrenzy of ambition, the delirium of pride and the excitement of alarmed interests, in these high regions in which crimes assume so easily the name of strokes of state policy. There is no doubt that Louis the Sixteenth had men around him, who thought his existence fatal to the monarchy. Had he not convened the national assembly? Did he not hesitate to break it up? It suited them to change his weakness into violence; but what were they to expect from a mind floating unceasingly between the resolutions of the evening and the influences of to-morrow? It was not a small interest they were concerned in defending or rather in saving at every hazard. Must the destinies of the high nobility and the fall of so many illustrious families be left to the mercy of inconsistency, new councils, a caprice of weakness, repentance?

Thus spoke some fanatics; it is certain that many among the royalists who were attached to Louis the Sixteenth, believed that the days of the monarchy had been threatened by an abominable plot. Others going further did not fear to throw the outrage of this suspicion* on the youngest brother of Louis the Sixteenth. But here the dissimilarity to truth was manifest, even joining on absurdity.

The stupid prejudices with which the Count d'Artois was imbued, the vanity of race, which his incapacity transformed into right, induced him naturally to conspire against the liberty of the people, but it was the only conspiracy for which he was fit. Constantly turned towards the attraction of easy pleasures, frivolously amiable, of a weak intellect, of a corruption of morals which was not destitute of generosity and grace, the Count d'Artois was so little made for things in large proportions, either crimes or virtues, that skill in manual exercises had always been a sufficient glory for him, and at twenty-three years of age, a pupil of the ropedancer Placide, he had been very ambitious of the talents of a ropedancer.† Beyond a certain limit, force is required for evil as well as for good, and the Count d'Artois had never any other than stubbornness, which is that of ignorance when sincerity is added to it.

The hatred of the enemies of the Duke of Orleans armed them about the same period with an accusation no less hateful and no less unjust.

* See concerning this, a pamphlet published in 1789, called *Le Fratricide Sacrilege*.

† Pierre de Champrobert, *le Comte d'Artois et l'Emigration*, p. 17.

It was said that some days after the departure of the princes, two men having started together for Turin, one of them remarked in his companion, who was named Dubois, the signs of an illy restrained agitation. In proportion as they advanced, the emotion of Dubois became more lively, and the alteration of his countenance more marked. Soon, either from remorse troubling his reason, or from impotence to keep one of those secrets which conscience brings to light, he let the motive of his anguish half escape him in imprudent words. They arrived at Chambéry. There the unknown person, who had observed Dubois attentively, offered him a supper, at the end of which the unfortunate man fell into frightful convulsions. He was poisoned.

This was the first story. But what was the secret of this Dubois ? What was he going to do at Turin ? Why had his travelling companion poisoned him ? It was maintained, without any proof whatever being furnished of these horrible accusations, that Dubois was a wretch bought up by the Machiavels of the faction of the Duke of Orleans, to poison the Count d'Artois ; that the unknown was an emissary instructed to watch over his conduct, and if he hesitated, to stifle the danger of his repentance in death ; that Dubois, when dying, had himself held this language ; that a statement of the declarations of the dying man had been immediately drawn up ; and that finally, the statements having been legalized, had been sent to M. de Montmorin, who had communicated it officially, but in secret to the court of Sardinia.*

It should be observed, if there were really proofs of it, why were they not produced ? The court had not only no reason to keep on terms with the Duke of Orleans, but they had, on the contrary, a manifest interest in crushing him. The Count d'Artois besides was not the presumptive heir who called for the blows of ambition. Having left the kingdom, he could not be a serious obstacle in the way of the Duke of Orleans. What then would have been the advantage of an attempt ? It is one of the sad powers of hatred easily to propose a crime when it can be profitable to it ; but even hatred is interdicted from believing in useless crimes.

The truth is, that the Duke of Orleans had none of these violent faculties which engender the fury of reigning, which hold it fast, which explain it. In the month of July, after the taking of the Bastille, it had been agreed between him and his satellites, that he should present himself at the council, that he should offer himself as mediator ; and that as the price of his mediation he should demand the dignity of lieutenant general of the kingdom . . . and when he went to execute the project, he was so agitated, that instead of the speech prepared beforehand, he pronounced these humble words, "Sire, in case matters shall become worse, I beseech your majesty to permit me to retire to England."† Profound passions have neither so much timidity, nor so much modesty.

The prince in whom the thirst for reigning was very ardent, was the

* *Mémoires impartiales des révolutions de France*, t. 1. p. 233. *Mémoires particuliers de Clermont Gallerande*, t. 2. p. 190 et 191, quoted by M. Pierre de Champrobert, in the *Comte d'Artois et l'Emigration*, p. 162.

† See the different depositions, especially those of Virieu and Bergassès, in the criminal proceedings concerning the 5th and 6th of October.

Count de Provence. If he had not the courage of ambition, he had at least its foresight and tenacity. Attentive to derive advantage from the faults of his relatives, he allowed the Condés and the Count d'Artois to incur the risks of first emigration; he waited. It was to create for himself prudently a particular provision in the bosom of the royal family; it was to make an action without moving; it was to show himself without coming out from the twilight.

Foreign courts were seized with alarm at the news of the throne of France being deserted. They had not, however, yet formed that last plot, of which the revolution made the material of its triumphs. But as they listen to the distant muttering of a storm which will not be avoided, kings already hear in their palace the noise of our great quarrel. They see that hereafter France was to be definitively charged with the general affairs of humanity. A glorious presentiment for us, and which fortune has not deceived; for now such is the general ascendancy of France, that in moving, she shakes Europe, and when she is now disturbed, nothing remains still.

CHAPTER XIV.

EMOTION OF FRANCE.

Humiliation of all the old Powers—Lally Tollendal and Robespierre—Terrible situation of the People—The Deputies of the National Assembly on their knees in the Public Square before the People—Murder of Sauvage; pardon of Thomassin obtained—Death of Foulon—Death of Bertier—True character of these events—Sensation produced—Proclamation proposed by Lally Tollendal—Strange part of Mirabeau—Advent of the Commune—Terror among the Nobles; Movement of Emigration—Distrust of the People—Plot of Brest; emotion of the People; establishment of a *Committee of Search*—Two doctrines in the Assembly—Return of Necker; excess and term of his popularity—Mysterious adventure of Pinet; the Company of Monopolists—Tragical end of Major Belsunce—The Revolution throughout all France.

THE blows of the hammer which demolished the Bastille, had been heard from one end of France to the other; the emotion was immense in all the provinces. But before telling under what different forms this emotion shone forth, before showing how even in the depths of the most distant countries, enthusiasm and terror were mingled, we must finish the picture of Paris during the last days of that month of July, at once so glorious and so terrible.

The royalty having set the example of submission, the old powers imitated it. The new majesty, the National Assembly, had, like all majesties, its courtiers and adorers. The grand council, the chamber of accounts, and the court of the mint came in turn to humble themselves before it. The parliament itself must bend. It had lately wished to raise its head, and the national assembly had annihilated it by a word it learned that its days of pride were gone, and that in attempting to re

animate the remains of its abated authority, it was but excavating its disgrace; it resigned itself. This may be judged by the decree it made on the occasion of the journey of Louis the Sixteenth to Paris.

"The court has decreed that the first president shall go to the king to thank him for having bestowed all his confidence on the representatives of the nation, and for having dissipated the alarms of the capital, by restoring tranquillity and security to it by his presence. It has also decreed that the first president shall go to the national assembly to thank it for having interposed its good offices with our lord the king, for the restoration of peace in the capital."

These words are very different from the fierce language of the magistracy, when they presented themselves as the only and living image of the country. It was not only *to our lord the king* that they were now to go, it was to the national assembly, the re-union of kings. The parliament had remained visible by the side of the throne; it disappeared in the shadow of the assembly.

Having thus reached the top, the representatives of burgherism had to sustain their souls at the height of their fortunes. It was the glory of some. Others were troubled by it.

We should add, to be just, that if the assembly were omnipotent in the aspect of the powers of the past, it was not in that of the people, who, since the 14th of July had felt themselves to be sovereign, and whose attitude had something indomitable about it. Mistakes besides began to appear. "Respect for submissive royalty," said burgherism, because it sought for guarantees. "What is royalty, if not the most shining of privileges?" asked the people, because they sought equality. Hence there was an invincible disposition in most of the members of the national assembly to be alarmed at the least details of popular life. To efface the word *royal* from every ensign;* to drink to the nation without remembering the king; to pursue every arrogant book with familiar threats; to applaud the actor, Dugazon, when in a full theatre, he compared Madame de Polignac, the friend of the queen, with the too celebrated favorite of Mary of Medicis . . . was only sport for the people; it was a subject of alarm for burgherism.

In the session of the 20th of July, Lally Tollendal rose with a sad countenance. He came to beseech his colleagues to guard themselves against the emotions of liberty. At a few paces from the tennis court, so boldly invaded, at a few leagues from the overthrown Bastille, in the presence of enemies who had not sheathed their swords, he said, that the great danger of the time was the spirit of revolt; that the representatives of the nation could only deal with the king, the father of his people and the true founder of liberty; that every citizen should quiver at the word troubles; that whosoever failed in confidence in the assembly or fidelity to the king, should here afterwards be reported as a bad citizen; that every man suspected, accused or arrested, should be placed in the hands of his natural judge; that the municipalities should exclude, in the formation of the burgher militia, those who were capable of injur-

* L'Ami du Roi, etc., Cahier 4. chap. 56. p. 55.

† Mémoires de Weber, t. 1. chap. 4. p. 396. Digitized by Google

ing the country.* He demanded that a solemn proclamation of those sentiments should be made the moral law of the French people. The provinces were agitated; a miller, named Sauvage, had been killed at Poissy, as a monopolist; the city of Saint Germain had been given up to the tumultuous empire of famine; Lally Tollendal was in the eyes of many of his colleagues the orator of public safety, and loud applauses hailed his speech. There is no doubt his plan would have been adopted, "having carried almost all the votes,"† if the most energetic members of the Breton club, Glaizen, Blésau, Busot, and especially Robespierre, had not opposed it. Robespierre was then but little known,‡ but on that day it might have been divined what the authority of his language would become. Full of an imperious astonishment, full of an austere vehemence, he exclaimed, "What has happened that authorizes M. Lally Tollendal to sound the tocsin? He speaks of an émeute. This émeute, gentlemen, is liberty. Do not be deceived; the contest is not over. To-morrow, perhaps, baneful attempts will be renewed; and who will repulse them, if we declare in advance those rebels who have armed for our safety?"§ The absolute gestures of Robespierre, the hidden fire which shone in his eyes, the convulsive movement of his thin lips, his face of a formidable pallor, the menacing and brief appeal which he made to the strength of the insulted people, made, beyond doubt, a profound sensation on the assembly, for the scene suddenly changed its appearance. No one dared any longer to sustain the plan of the proclamation, which had been so vehemently applauded at first. When Lally Tollendal essayed to defend himself, a deep silence, and then murmurs condemned him.|| "Sir," exclaimed a voice to him from the tribune, "you abuse your popularity." He, seized with a sudden alarm, proposed to modify his plan, affirming that it had been far from his thoughts to attack the conduct of the Parisians, and declaring that he retracted the word *rebels*.¶ But the assembly did not dare to resolve on any thing, and the plan of the proclamation was sent to the bureaux for examination, who disfigured it.**

It would have been, besides, very strange, if they had not thought of sustaining the people, when they had to save them from the agony of famine. Never was there a more painful, more irritating situation. Indescribable scenes of distress every day alarmed the populous quarters of the capital. In the faubourg Saint Antoine, thousands of men asked in sombre despair, what was the occasion for the glorious strife. "To die, to die, we prefer," they said, "the cannon to misery."††

Subscription lists were handed about. Caron de Beaumarchais gave twelve thousand livres to the poor,‡‡ the Archbishop of Paris generously

* Moniteur, session of the 20th of July, 1789.

† Le Courrier de Versailles à Paris, No. 18. p. 301.

‡ So little that almost all the journals of the day called him Robert Pierre.

§ Le Courrier de Versailles à Paris, No. 18. p. 305 et 301.

|| This sudden change is stated in the Moniteur itself, in which, however, the physiognomy of this important session is reproduced in not only an incomplete but an altered manner.

¶ Le Courrier de Versailles à Paris, No. 19. p. 319 et 321.

** Ibid., p. 324.

†† The report of Bessin, the commander of the bourgeois militia of the district of Saint Méry.

‡‡ Prud'homme, Révolutions de Paris, t. 1. p. 34.

taxed himself twenty thousand; but these partial efforts only served to prove the impotence of charity. A loaf of bread, of four pounds' weight, had sold for several months for fifteen sols; the assembly of electors placed it at twelve sols, six deniers. A derisory benefit; the question was, how were they to procure bread at twelve sols, and the poor could not, because the sources of life were masked from them with a barbarous hand; because monopolists,* whom no one had the courage to denounce, manœuvred at ease in their infamy, and exhausted the crime of their assassin conspiracy. False news added the emotion of imaginary dangers to these evils. It was believed that the Abbess of Montmartre had consented to make her convent a mysterious arsenal,† it was believed that a plot had been formed to poison the French guards of the barracks of Oursine, by mixing injurious drugs with their food or drink.‡ Thus the people saw and felt themselves surrounded with enemies. If they listened to the deliberations of the national assembly, they heard themselves treated as rebels, as the reward of their devotion to liberty. If they cast their eyes around them, they only saw hunger stamping the faces of wives and children with its fatal seal. If they interrogated the rumors about, they brought them only subjects of alarm. And if, at the end of resignation, they cried out justice, there was not a tribunal on which the past was not still seated, not a judge who could not be suspected of connivance with those it was necessary to punish.

Events are about to be recorded which will make your heart bleed; if equity is dear to you, do not forget what preceded them.

We have spoken of the death of the miller, Sauvage; about the time when this unfortunate man perished, the victim of excited suspicions, the national assembly was warned that a rich farmer in the environs of Saint Germain was threatened with a like fate. This farmer, whose name was Thomassin, had been pointed out as a monopolist; insane precautions taken by him served to denounce him. A horseman of the Marechaussée, acting as his escort everywhere,§ it was no longer doubted, and his death was resolved upon. He was confined in the prison of Poissy, around which the crowd was already howling, when a deputation from the national assembly arrived, impatient to save him. The Bishop of Chartres harangues this furious multitude, he appeases it, when some one cries out, "They did not try to protect Sauvage because he was poor; they want to save Thomassin because he is rich." The fury of the assailants reawakens at these words; the prison is impetuously stormed, the prisoner is taken out, and swords glitter. The Bishop of Chartres kneels on the public square, and the deputies imitated him, and they all hold out their suppliant hands towards the people. "No, no, he must die." The Bishop of Chartres, with his eyes full of tears, then asks, as a last favor, that the victim should be permitted to confess himself. A curate advances, the people are softened, and Thomassin saved.||

* Montjoie himself avows it. See *l'Ami du Roi*, etc., Cahier 4. chap. 58. p. 75.

† *Le Courier de Versailles à Paris*, No. 16. p. 264.

‡ *L'Ami du Roi*, etc., Cahier 4. chap. 56. p. 34.

§ *Le Courier de Versailles à Paris*, No. 15. p. 227.

|| Report of Cadmus to the National Assembly.

But of the men designated to the popular resentments, the most detested was Foulon, a harsh character, a sombre and violent soul. "I remember very well," says one of his most ardent apologists,* "that when they talked of admitting him into the ministry, that the alarm was general in the faubourgs." This ferocious language was lent him: "*If I were minister, I would make the French eat hay*;" and again, "*Paris should be mowed like a meadow*." Did Foulon, indeed, allow these words, worthy of the insolent cruelties of the emperors of old Rome, to escape him? Most of the writings of the time attribute them to him, and he was thought capable of having done so. It was also maintained that he had soiled, by acts of peculation and rapine, his successive functions of intendant of the army, war, marine and finances; that he had advised the bankruptcy; that he had used the public misfortunes as a means of opulence; that he had speculated on the famine. We should add in justice that none of these accusations were proved, his fortune, though very considerable, not being sufficient testimony against him.† What is certain is, that the revolution could count him among its most mortal foes. This was so well known at court, that when they were deliberating about opposing force to liberty, the Marshal de Broglie was anxious to have him for an adjunct. Foulon did not accept a burthen which alarmed his old age, but he gave terrible advice. In his opinion, the king had but one of two parts to take, either to throw himself into the arms of the revolution, or to crush it at a blow.§ In the last case, there was not a moment to lose; they must go straight at the principal leaders, hand them over to the judges, and kill the revolution by striking at his head. Those whom Foulon had thus threatened, were not long in knowing it, and from that time his arrest was determined upon.

After the taking of the Bastille, the storm began to mutter around him in so menacing a manner, that on the 16th of July he obtained a passport from his section. He had done this only at the solicitations of his daughter-in-law,|| and when on the next day she urged him to take refuge at Moulins, he refused to go, being deceived by the illusions of his conscience and his pride.

The danger was however increasing hourly. On the 17th of July, as has been seen, Louis the Sixteenth came to Paris, to contract an alliance with burgherism; he had consented to wear the colors of the insurrection; the defeat of the feudal party was complete, evident, irreparable. Foulon felt shaken. The death of his valet which happened in the mean time, suggested to him a stratagem fit to turn aside the anger of his enemies, and the vengeance of the people. He passed himself off as the

* L'Ami du Roi, etc., Cahier 4. chap. 58. p. 79.

† Le Cousin Jacques, p. 122. Événements de la Semaine, a small paper of the time. Gorsas, Courier de Versailles à Paris. Hist. de la Révolution par deux amis de la liberté, t. 2. p. 117. Lettre à M. le Marquis de Luchet, etc. etc.

‡ By a detailed note handed us by the family of M. Foulon, and which we have consulted with extreme distrust, as was our right and duty, it appears that the fortune left by M. Foulon to his children did not equal what he owned in 1747.

§ See in the Mémoires de Madame Campan what she relates of the two memoirs Foulon presented to the king.

|| Note handed us by the family.

dead man.* On the 19th of July, he left Paris; on the evening of the 20th, he was at the house of M. de Sartines, at Viry, a village situated on the road to Fontainebleau. On leaving his country seat of Morangis, whither he had first gone, Foullon had left orders that his letters should be sent to him. The hatred which pursued him was so wide spread, that instead of sending him his letters, the domestic hastened to carry them to Grappe, the Syndic of the village. The tocsin is hastily sounded; the peasants come together, Foullon is discovered and arrested.

The defenders of his memory contest the fact, that his arrest was *by his own vassals*. It is however certain, that his property was near where his person was seized, and we read this characteristic avowal in Montjoie himself. "He was said to be execrated by his vassals, and it is very likely he was not beloved, since he did not seek an asylum among them."†

Be that as it may, he was scarcely discovered, when his punishment commenced. The peasants placed a necklace of nettles on him, a bouquet of thistles in his button hole, and a truss of hay upon his shoulders, and fastening him behind a cart, with his hands tied, they dragged him to Paris. He was loaded with outrages by the way. He was thirsty; a glass of vinegar was offered to him.‡

On the 22d of July, towards six in the morning, he mounted the steps of the Hotel de Ville. The sudden apparition of this man already condemned, was a source of great trouble to the members of the permanent committee. How were they to escape the responsibility of his punishment? How shun the danger of his impunity? The committee decided that he should be carried off secretly, during the night, to the prisons of the abbaye of Saint Germain. But the arrest of Foullon having become known in Paris, the place de Grève was soon filled with groups, whom persons of an elegant exterior, fashionable men appeared to excite.§ They cried out, "Foullon, Foullon, we want to see Foullon." A stranger presented himself to the assembled electors, handed them the fragments of a letter which he said the prisoner had torn with his teeth, when he was arrested.|| Bailly, accompanied by twenty electors, then advanced on the steps, to address the crowd; but being unable to make himself heard by all, or to persuade those who heard him, he re-entered in despair. The situation was becoming critical. They threatened to burn the Hotel de Ville, if Foullon was allowed to escape; the clamors were changing into

* In the note handed us by the family, this fact is purely and simply denied; this does not prevent our regarding it as true.

1st. Because most of the writings of the time affirm it;

2d. Because it is not denied by Montjoie, who calls it an innocent stratagem; cahier, 4. chap. 58. p. 79.

3d. Because the people were so well deceived by it, that at the Palais Royal, they amused themselves about Foullon himself having descended into hell.

4th. Finally, because history would be impossible, if to destroy notorious facts, a simple denial on the part of relatives was sufficient, to whom besides a feeling, very respectable, renders impartiality so difficult.

† L'Ami du Roi, etc., cahier 4. chap. 58. p. 79.

‡ Mémoire de Grappe.

§ Procès-verbal de l'assemblée de électeurs, t. 2. p. 314.—L'Ami du Roi, etc., cahier 4. chap. 58. p. 83.

|| L'Ami du Roi, cahier 4. chap. 58. p. 80.

murmurs. . . What was to be done. Seized with alarm, the electors who were present were themselves ignorant, where the members of the night committee had concealed Foullon, if indeed they had not aided him to escape. They went through the building, found the prisoner in the hall of the queen, and induced him to show himself to the people. He was sixty-four years old; at the sight of his face, on which age had stamped its impress, the crowd was calmed, and they already appeared to be inclining towards pity, when a shout suddenly rose, "Let him be led out and judged."* At the same moment, a band of furious persons penetrates into the Hotel de Ville; the sentinels are knocked down, the barriers broken; the hall of the permanent committee is invaded. The energetic Moreau de Saint Méry demands silence, and obtains it, and addressing the crowd, the elector Delapoise exclaims in a voice of emotion, "Every culprit should be judged. I do not believe there is a single executioner among you—yes, judged at once and hung. But, observed another elector, Opelin, in order to judge him, we need judges—judge him yourselves." A kind of tribunal was then suddenly got up, consisting of seven members, whose names were given in from different parts of the hall, and among whom were two curates of Paris. Duveyrier, named to discharge the duties of public accuser, commences a mockery of an examination. "Of what crime is Foullon accused? He has oppressed the people; he has said they should eat grass; he has advised bankruptcy; he is a monopolist; he was in the scheme." The two priests rose, "There is an accusation here of capital crimes. It is our duty to decline, for the church prohibits shedding blood.—Yes, yes, they are right;" and fearful lest the fury of the multitude should require their services, they hastened away. What was to be done; were they sporting with the credulity of the people; did they think to screen the culprits. The tumult became frightful. Foullon heard it all in the hall of the queen. "You are very calm," said one of his guards to him. "Crime alone can disconcert, was his reply."† He was ignorant that public, like private life, has its crimes, and that one of those is to conspire against liberty. They came to take him, to conduct him into the great hall. The men of the people formed a chain with locked arms, which protected the entrance of Foullon.‡ A chair was placed on a table; he was ordered to seat himself on it. Thus exposed to view an accused of sixty-four years old, would have inspired some compassion, if among the accusers there had not been some whom the ardor of private vengeance inflamed, others, who perhaps were anxious to hide a secret by this death, and others, who, concealed enemies of the revolution, hoped to see it, once plunged into the intoxication of blood, march at chance and totter.§

Lafayette appeared. To justify Foullon was impossible, to interest himself in him dangerous; he endeavored to save him, by exhibiting impla-

* *Mémoires de Bailly*, t. 2. p. 111.

† *Prud'homme, Révolutions de Paris*, t. 1. p. 23.

‡ *Mémoires de Bailly*, t. 2. p. 111.

§ The procès-verbal of the electors, and the *mémoires* of Bailly, show clearly that the murder of Foullon was not clearly the work of the people. Such was also the opinion of the queen, as may be seen by the *mémoires* of Madame Campan.

cability; "I cannot blame," he said, "your indignation against this man, I have never loved him, I have always regarded him as a great wretch, and there is no punishment too severe for him. . . . But he has accomplices; we must learn who they are. I am for conducting him to the Abbaye. We will try him there, and he will be condemned to the infamous death he has too richly deserved."* Those who heard this speech applauded it. Unfortunately the old man, who was seen from every part of the hall, understood too well the intention of Lafayette; he thought himself saved, and mechanically joined signs of approval to the applause of the multitude. "You see," cried a voice, "they understand one another," and a well dressed man added,† "What necessity is there for judging a man, who has been judged already for thirty years?" It was a decree of death. In vain did Lafayette make several attempts to retard the fatal moment; it was announced that the Palais Royal was stirring, that the faubourg Saint-Antoine was on the march. A fresh crowd pushes against the multitude which already inundated the stair case of the Hotel de Ville, the corridors and the hall of Saint-John. Electors, judges and witnesses are hurled against the bureau, the table is overturned, the chair of Foullon upset, and the unfortunate man dragged beneath a lamp. A rope is passed around his neck, and he is raised a certain height. . . . Twice did the rope break, and twice did the old man fall on his knees, crying for pity. Some of the people, moved with pity, raised their sabres to put an end to this agony‡ The executioners oppose them, they claim the ignominy of the punishment as their right, and go in search of a new rope, whilst, yielding to terror, with a look full of anguish, and joined hands, Foullon asks his life, and cannot even obtain death. After a delay of a quarter of an hour, he is hung for the third time, and finally expires. A silver buckle, two gold watches, two purses containing twelve Louis, were found on him; these were taken to the committee of the electors who gave a receipt for them.§ A wretch then cut off his head, filled the mouth with a gag formed of a handful of hay, and ran to carry this horrid trophy through Paris.|| The trunk was carried to the Morgue, the museum of unknown corpses.

The same day was lighted by a no less frightful drama. Foullon had committed the crime of urging on the conspiracy formed against the most legitimate and inviolable revolution that ever took place; Bertier de Sauvigny, the son-in-law of Foullon, had been the intendant of the anti-revolutionary army, and had been obliged in this capacity, to provide for the subsistence of the troops whose presence threatened outraged and starved Paris. He was suspected strongly of having wished

* This is the same speech which all the journalists of the time reported, and which is given in the *Histoire de la Révolution par deux amis de la liberté*. Afterwards, for reasons which may be easily conceived, Bailly, the electors, and Lafayette did not publish it, until they had singularly smoothed it down.

† See Vol. 2, of the *Procès-Verbal* and *l'Ami du Roi*, cahier 4. chap. 58. p. 83.—This is besides the word which Bailly uses, t. 2. p. 114.

‡ *L'Ami du Roi*, cahier 4. chap. 58. p. 84.—*Mémoires de Ferrières*, t. 1. p. 160.

§ Charles Comte, *Hist. de la garde nationale*, p. 104.

|| *Le Cousin Jacques*, p. 124.—*Annales Parisiennes*, p. 61.

them to mow the growing harvest, as well to subsist the cavalry as to heighten the price of grain;* he was accused of having drawn up lists of proscription, of having distributed to the soldiers in camp at St. Denis, eight thousand cartridges, and twelve hundred pounds of powder;† and finally, different letters found in his portfolio and published,‡ show to what facts these imputations refer.

"The 5th, M. the Count de Revellac asks to share the funds in the sale of grain made by the government. The 11th, a statement of the number of soldiers, the sects of the Palais-Royal and the names of the orators—*same date*, M. de Lambesc acknowledges the reception of three thousand cartridges, sent at one o'clock in the morning—*same date*, M. de Besenval complains of not having cartridges—*same date*, M. Despres complains of his want of balls. The 12th, the daughter of the intendant of Paris complains of the spirit of license which is reaching all minds. She trembles at the consequences, and is preparing to quit Paris—*same date*, M. de Bar asks where he is to go to seek for balls?—*Same date*, the count de Vassan asks for three thousand cartridges.—Intention of establishing a camp at Saint Denis—of cutting the harvest when green, giving indemnity, etc."

Bertier was an intelligent and honest administrator; but his harshness, his haughtiness, the insolence of his manners and of his language had made him many enemies.§ It was remembered voluntarily that he was the worthy son-in-law of Foulon, the worthy son of the old president of the *Maupéou* parliament. Montjoie relates,|| that one day an old peasant of Vincennes presented himself to the intendant of Paris, to ask for his son, on whom the lot of a soldier had fallen, and that being sharply repulsed after the offer of the little money he owned, after a thousand entreaties mingled with tears, the old man had addressed these sinister words to Bertier; "My son will go, but you hard man, soul of bronze, father of a family also, remember the curse which a parent heaps upon you. You will die miserably, you will die on the place de Grève, and the time is not distant."

Three months afterwards, it was on the 20th of July, two masons perceived Bertier passing through a street of Compeigne. They immediately descend from their scaffold, go straight to Bertier, and tell him they had orders to arrest him, wherever they met him.¶

The committee of the electors of Paris, being informed of this arrest, at first disapproved of it. Having become the arbiters of the fate of the

* This fact is denied in a statement handed us by the family of M. Bertier. It is said in it, on the contrary, without any proof however being furnished, that M. Bertier opposed the mowing of the growing harvest, and that the horses were fed on dry food. M. Bertier is represented in this note, as saying to M. de Broglie, that it would be an *unpopular and useless measure*, to cut the growing harvest. What he should have said was, that it was *criminal* in any case.

† Hist. de la révolution par deux amis de la liberté, t. 2. p. 128, 129.

‡ Gorsas, *Courrier de Versailles à Paris et de Paris à Versailles*, No. 17. p. 288, 289.

§ See in l'*Ami du Roi*, whose author is a most vehement defender of the memories of Foulon and Bertier, cahier 4. chap. 49. p. 87.

|| Ibid. p. 88. The author who relates this fact, assures us he had it from an eye witness.

¶ In the manuscript note sent us by the family of M. Bertier.

citizens, these astonishing dictators would have preferred this time seizing on the right of grace, of usurping clemency; but learning that if the intendant were not set at liberty, the municipal officers of Compeigne would not be answerable for his life, they determined that a detachment of two hundred and forty horse should go to Compeigne, under the command of two electors, Etienne de la Rivière and André de la Presle, should take possession of Bertier, and conduct him to one of the prisons of Paris.*

In the mean time a touching scene was passing at Versailles. On the morning of the 22d, Lally Tollendal was awakened before sunrise by plaintive accents. He opens his curtains, and sees a young man before him whose countenance was mortally pale. He opens his arms to him, and the young man throws himself into them, exclaiming in a voice which was half stifled by sobs, "Ah, sir, you passed fifteen years in defending the memory of your father, save the life of mine."† It was the son of Bertier who spoke. Lally Tollendal conducted him to the Duke de Liancourt, who had been recently raised to the presidency of the National Assembly; but he found there was no session on that day, and in this case delay was death. The entreaties of the son of Bertier were transmitted to Louis the Sixteenth, who dictated a letter of safety himself.‡ . . . Useless interference, Louis the Sixteenth was no longer king.

The route of the intendant from Compeigne to Paris, was like a funeral triumph. The passage of the horsemen of the escort having only served to awaken the distrustful curiosity of the population, six hundred men on horseback had hastened together from different points, less to increase the cortege, than to watch it. They surrounded the cabriolet in which Bertier was with Etienne de la Rivière, with a fierce air, whilst upon the way,§ thousands of citizens advanced to meet the intendant. In vain had the electors sent orders to the escort to sleep at Bourget, in order that the arrival of Bertier should not coincide with the death of Foullon; this order could not be executed, so numerous and threatening was the crowd. Curses and sinister cries were heard all the way. At Louvres, they broke in the front of the cabriolet, that nothing should impede their sight of the old intendant. Twenty times was Bertier aimed at, and twenty times did the elector protect him with his own body. There was a time when the multitude, unable to distinguish which of the two was Bertier, wanted the prisoner to take off his hat; but at the same instant Etienne de la Rivière, with an heroic movement uncovered himself. A cart appeared at the barrier Saint Martin, having writings upon planks disposed in stages, on which was read; *He has robbed the king and France. He has devoured the substance of the people. He has been the slave of the rich and the tyrant of the poor. He has betrayed his country*, etc. . . .|| There were other accusatory phrases, whose style being little in conformity with the habitual language of the faubourgs, appeared rather to refer to that of the *well dressed* persons, who in the course of

* Mémoires de Bailly, t. 2. p. 82 et 92.

† Note sent us by the family of M. Bertier.

§ Quinzaine mémorable. Lettre à M. le Marquis de Luchet.

|| L'Ami du Roi, cahier 4. chap. 58.

‡ Ibid.

this bloody day, studied to irritate the passions of the people. It was in the sight of and as it were under the fire of these defamatory inscriptions that Bertier entered Paris. Pieces of that hard and black bread, that homicidal bread, to which the poor were condemned, were shown him on the points of pikes, or were even thrown into his vehicle with the exclamation, "Look at the bread you have made us eat."* Bourgeois crowned with laurels† preceded the carriage, women sang to the sound of military music, drums beat, and fifty lighted torches cast a mournful light upon the train.‡ At the heights of Saint Méry, a group showed Bertier the head of Foullon, soiled with blood and dust, on the end of a pike. "It is the head of de Launey," the generous Etienne de la Rivière hastened to say. Bertier believed him. He became pale, however, a mournful smile contracted his lips, and he said to the elector, "I would believe these agonies unexampled, if Jesus Christ had not experienced more bloody ones. He was a God; I am but a man."§

It was about nine o'clock in the evening. Bertier, conducted to the Hotel de Ville, was introduced into the hall Saint Jean, before the assembled electors. Bailly interrogates him. "I obeyed superior orders," he replied, with assurance; "you have my papers, you are as well informed as I am." Bailly prolonged, for form's sake, an insignificant examination, when Bertier asked for permission to take some rest, saying that he had not slept for four nights. At that moment frightful clamors arise from the place de Grève, and these words are distinguished in the midst of the tumult: "Here is the Palais Royal. Here is the faubourg Saint-Antoine." A violent group rushes immediately into the hall, the electors are hurled against the bureau, and Bailly, troubled to the bottom of his heart, stammers out these words, "Sirs . . . the result . . . our deliberations of this morning . . . he must be transferred to the abbaye|| . . ." Bertier went out, accompanied by M. de la Rivière. He used this language on the staircase, which announced in him either a surprising security, or strange thoughts. "*My God, what strange cries this people utter!*"¶ then turning to his companion, said, "I am going to prison, and I have no money." Etienne de la Rivière, who understood too well the clamors of the Grève, replied nothing, heaved a deep sigh, and drawing some louis from his pocket, handed them to Bertier.** But scarcely have they set their foot upon the place, when the crowd spring on them. Already is the prisoner seized, already is he dragged to the lamp on which Foullon had expired, when transported with rage, he seizes a gun, springs head foremost into the thickest of his assailants, strikes in his turn, and falls, pierced with a thousand blows. A dragoon who said he had a father to avenge, and was probably the son of the old man of whom we have spoken, approached the body, opened the entrails,

* L'Ami du Roi, cahier 4. chap. 58. p. 91.

† Hist. de la révolution, par deux amis de la liberté, t. 2. p. 131.

‡ Lettre à M. le Marquis de Luchet, which agrees with an engraving of the time, representing the entrance of Bertier into Paris, and which we have now before us.

§ Statement of Etienne de la Rivière, quoted by Bailly in his Memoirs, t. 2. p. 120.

|| Le Courier de Versailles à Paris, No. 17. p. 285.

¶ Ibid. p. 286. Le Cousin Jacques, p. 126.

** Le Courier de Versailles à Paris, No. 17. p. 287.

tore out the heart, and carried it all bleeding to the committee of the Hotel de Ville, exclaiming, "there is the heart of Bertier."* An elector fainted at this frightful sight; Bailly remained immovable, and as if struck by a thunderbolt, whilst Lafayette exclaimed, "free me from a post which compels me to witness such horrors."† A murmur of indignation run also among the people, and the fierce soldier was killed in a duel on that same night by his comrades,‡ who imposed on him the necessity of dying.

The picture we have drawn presents features against which it is impossible for an elevated soul not to revolt. Refinements in cruelty, vengeance tasted slowly, impatience to hold the head of a dead enemy in the hand, the ardor of seeing it bloody and soiled, are delights which should be left to tyrants, and the people should never descend, even in their most legitimate wrath, to the level of their oppressors. But here, the useless barbarities were the work of a small number of wretches, whose blows some persons of superior condition urged on. What is true of the mass of the people is, that they abhorred Foulon and Bertier; that they rejoiced tumultuously in their arrest, and that their deaths appeared to them, with the exception of the circumstances which made them odious, not an act of vengeance, but an act of justice. In the eyes of this menaced, insulted and famished multitude, reduced to despair, Foulon and Bertier personified the recent plot of the court; they struck the counter revolution in their persons, as they had struck the Bastille in that of De Launey. We should also remember, that there was not then any regular tribunal before which they could have been brought; that a judicial power, which corresponded with the great changes which had happened, did not yet exist; that the old judicial power was one of the very institutions to be destroyed; that it would have been madness on the part of the revolution to have saluted its judges in its enemies; that, finally, if France was submitted to a state of war, the fault was with those who had had the sacrilegious audacity to place between them and Paris, the appliances of arms, a camp, a foreign soldiery, and to reply to the voice of the country . . . with cannon.

Be it as it may, there was much agitation about this double punishment. Lafayette handed in his resignation, which the districts refused. Mirabeau wrote on the crimes of the possessors of the earth, on the too long patience of the people, on what was legitimate in certain cases in the explosion of public anger, adding, however, that the régime of popular transports could not be prolonged without leading men, sooner or later, to regard a despot as a saviour.§ Unfortunately by the side of these commentaries, which united weight to vehemence, appeared pamphlets full of a hateful gaiety: *The life, death and miracles of M. de Foulon*—*The truss of hay, or the tragical death of a Minister of forty-eight hours*—*The enraged in hell*—*Address of thanks of Monseigneur Belzebub to the Parisian people*, etc., etc. An engraving was exposed

* Mémoires de Bailly, t. 2. p. 123.

† Le Courrier de Versailles à Paris, No. 17. p. 287.

‡ Hist. de la révolution par deux amis de la liberté, t. 2. chap. 5. p. 137.

§ Dix-neuvième lettre du Comte de Mirabeau à ses commentateurs.

for sale, representing a man seated before a desk, holding a pen in his hand, and solving a rule in arithmetic. There were five heads cut off on his desk, and on the paper was written, *take five from twenty-four and nineteen remain.** Among the pamphlets of which we speak, there were also some manifestly royal: *the resignation of the executioner of Paris—Letter from the executioner of high works to his brethren.* What matters it, however? The revolution was not to recognize as its own, those who, even in following it, failed in respect to it. We do not judge of the waves of the sea by their foam.

The National Assembly received a profound impression from the deaths of Foulon and Bertier. Many desired to repress the outbreaks of the people, to restrain the violence of its enthusiasm, to impose silence on the Grève, to prevent individual liberty from perishing, immolated to the law of public safety; but the torrent was already beginning to roll over its banks. Lally Tollendal, however, reproduced his plan of a proclamation. Prompt to interest the sensibility of his auditors in the success of his views, he presented a pathetic recital of his interview with young Bertier, seeking thus to change the hatred which the father had inspired into pity for the son.† Mirabeau interrupted him shortly, "you are but feeling," he said, "when we should be thinking;" and accompanying his words by an expressive gesture, he agitated, without paying attention to it, the weepers that he wore on his sleeves.‡ He was then in deep mourning; he had lost his father.§ The motion of Lally Tollendal, though feebly sustained and actively opposed, passed, but with modifications which entirely destroyed its bearing. The National Assembly invited the citizens to peace, and declared that the law alone should punish the depositaries of power, who, by their crimes, caused the misfortunes of the people. Such an act was a fault, because it could not be enforced. Paris paid no attention to it; it scarcely knew of it.

The attitude of Mirabeau deserves here to be remarked. It may be recollected that towards the end of the month of June, he had been the first to propose an address, of which the plan of Lally Tollendal was in truth but the resurrection. Those popular excitements which he then blamed with so much vehemence, his genius now adopted; we must tell the cause.

There had been a question at court for some time, of calling the *plebeian count* to the aid of the expiring monarchy. This was the opinion of the most skilful counsellors of Louis the Sixteenth; it was the opinion of his two aunts, Madame Adelaide and Madame Louisa, who both mingled in politics, the first from her chateau of Bellevue, the second from her convent of Saint-Denis.|| Mirabeau was informed of these dispositions, and yielding to the insatiable desires of his heart, he commission-

* L'Ami du Roi, cahier 4. chap. 60. p. 98.

† Le Courier de Versailles à Paris, No. 20. p. 338.

‡ L'Ami du Roi, cahier 4. chap. 63. p. 43.

§ In announcing the death of his father, Mirabeau said, "The loss of my father, if I may so speak, places the true citizens of the world in mourning." Dix-neuvième lettre.

|| Correspondance secrète de plusieurs grands personnages, &c., p. 109.

ed the Count de Lamarck to serve as his intermediary with the king.* To accept the advances of Mirabeau . . . the king would have done it; the queen was opposed to it. Had the royalty descended so low, that its safety was at the price of such an alliance? After having dreaded Mirabeau as an enemy, it was too much humiliation to submit to him as an auxiliary; without taking it into the account, that such men impose themselves, when they appear to give themselves. Thus thought, thus spoke Marie Antoinette. She detested Mirabeau, and with a soul all murdered by the recent sacrifice of her affections, she was irritated at having to unite the sacrifice of her hatred to it. Mirabeau was then again rejected. His anger may be conceived. Sure of what he could do against those who had been so imprudent as to disdain him, he swore to place them at his feet through fear. Finding his rancors too restricted in the National Assembly, he determined to create for himself a royalty on the public square. He went from district to district, breathing his wrath every where, leaving the inflamed traces of his eloquence every where behind him; decrying the indecisive reign of the electors, preparing the fall of their usurped power, and placing his own candidature in full agitation. His great ambition was to be chosen Mayor of Paris, and he felt well determined, if the court did not bend, to govern the tempests with the power which floated in the uncertain hands of Bailly.

But the districts were at the mercy of an immense majority of the bourgeois, to whom the violence of his passions was a subject of anxiety; so that his efforts only hurried changes whose advantages escaped him.

It is very natural after a long servitude, to taste, if we may so speak, one's power, and to prove it for oneself. The primary assemblies no sooner knew their sovereignty than they wavered. On its side the oligarchy of the Hotel de Ville was far from believing in its right. It happened from this, that on an invitation from Bailly, the sixty districts appointed a new assembly of one hundred and twenty members. It was commissioned to provide for the reorganization of the municipal power; but its first burst carrying it beyond that, it confirmed Bailly and La Fayette in their functions, congratulated the electors on their zeal by inviting them to continue their sessions; established a commission of police; instituted a bureau of subsistence; in a word it took the reins of the city and adorned itself with that name, since become so tragical, **THE COMMUNE.**

The deaths of Foullon and Bertier having however terrified the nobles, many of them emigrated, among whom were the Duke de Luxemburg, the Duke de Coigny, the Prince de Lambese, the Count de Vaudreuil, the Princess de Beauffremont, the Count de Cayla, the Marquis de Sérens, etc. . . . Did not this vast desertion of the principal nobility cover a signal of war? Was it not a silent, but sinister recourse to the interference of the foreigner? The people were not deceived. They felt that if persons attached to their country by the thousand bonds of wealth, happiness, pride and pleasant habits, fled instead of resigning themselves, or defending themselves, it could only be with the intention of returning

at the head of those same foreign soldiers with whom they had recently dared to threaten Paris. Thus the people were inexorable in their vigilance. The Baron de Bachman, a major of the regiment of Swiss guards, was led to the Hotel de Ville, only because in descending the Pont Royal, opposite the Thuilleries, his carriage had gone to the left, to the side of Versailles.* The distrust of Paris soon reached the provinces. Suspicion guarded the roads, kept the gates of the cities, stirred up the villages, extended along the frontiers. The municipality of Villenaux retained Besenval as a prisoner. Cazalès, who had precipitately quitted the National Assembly, in which he was to distinguish himself by the combats of eloquence, was arrested at the entrance of Caussade and returned in spite of himself to his renown. The Abbé Maury fled towards the north after having thrown away his bands and knotted his hair, but as he was passing through Peronne, the peasants remarked that he had no cockade in his hat; he was questioned, recognized and made a prisoner in a chamber of the Hotel de Ville at Peronne. About the same time a suspicious person was conducted to the authorities of Havre; he called himself Chevalier, said he was a merchant, and had as a travelling companion a young man who had no passport. They were both kept as prisoners.† This merchant, this suspected traveller, this man thus arrested as an obscure vagabond, was the Duke de la Vauguyon, the ambassador from France to Spain, ex-governor of Louis the Sixteenth. His companion was the Duke de Carency his son. Such facts are sufficient to show what was the situation of minds through the whole extent of France.

Why are we astonished at it? Every thing concurred to excite, to embitter the popular distrust. Fatal messengers, mysterious couriers were travelling the roads. To heighten it, the first powers sprung from the revolution were uncertain; they refused themselves if not the cares at least the responsibilities of vigilance, they were evidently afraid of the condition in which the days of the crisis were placing the common safety, and whilst the representatives of high burgherism at the Hotel de Ville were making no scruples at placing injurious restrictions on the right of carrying about the writings of authors without a *known existence*,‡ the majority of the National Assembly dared not contest with *known* conspirators the right of corresponding with impunity with their accomplices of the interior, the right of sealing their intrigues with an inviolable seal, the liberty finally of conspiring against liberty.

The Count d'Artois, as has been seen, had made himself the centre of the counter revolution. Letters to his address having been seized on by the Baron de Castelnau, a Frenchman residing at Geneva, they were sent to the Hotel de Ville, from whence Bailly passed them over to the Duke de Liancourt, the president of the National Assembly. Embarrassed with such a burthen the Duke de Liancourt sent back the despatches to the Hotel de Ville. The debates were opened. When the country was in danger, when the noblest sentiments that ever spoke to

* L'Ami du Roi, Cahier 4. chap. 91. p. 121.

† Ibid. p. 122.

‡ Decree about Colporteurs.

the heart of man were about to triumph, were they permitted to break the seal of a manifestly dangerous correspondence? Dupont de Nemours, Le Camus, Lally Tollendal, Mirabeau were strongly in the negative. The contrary opinion was maintained by the Count de Chatenay, Rewbell and Gouy d'Arcy. To these last, the Bishop of Langres opposed examples drawn from antiquity, he quoted Cæsar, but according to the expression of Gorsas, Robespierre *crushed the argument of the Bishop of Langres*.* It was not antiquity they had there to invoke, it was the supreme law of public safety. Public safety! These two words in the mouth of Robespierre, would have made the assembly start, if they had been enabled then to foresee all the power, majesty, terror and prodigies they contained. The discussion was not followed by any vote. What did the seized letters say? They were ignorant, and apprehensions were increased by them. Glorious torments of the people, very easy to conceive; the treasure they were anxious to preserve, had cost so much to conquer.

In the midst of this universal disquietude, news was spread about which filled souls with indignation. Men went from street to street crying, *the great treason, the great conspiracy of the aristocrats*, and the gazettes announced that the odious design of surrendering Brest to the English had actually been conceived. The rumor had an official source; it was but the resound of a secret reposed in M. de Montmorin by the ambassador of England towards the early part of June. It remained to know, if in denouncing to the court of France a plot otherwise so carefully kept, both as to the names of the authors and the precise circumstances, England, faithful to the genius of her policy, did not wish to fan the flame of our disorders. What is certain is, that the Duke of Dorset exhibited a singular zeal in increasing the scandal. He wrote a letter to M. de Montmorin which was read in full assembly. The ambassador said in it:—

"Your excellency will recall several conversations which I had with you at the beginning of last June, the frightful plot which had been proposed in regard to the port of Brest, and the haste with which I placed the king and his ministers on their guard, the reply of my court, which corresponded so strongly with my own sentiments, and which repulsed with horror the proposition which was made to it You see how essential it is for me that justice should be rendered to my own conduct and that of my court. . . ."

The accusation, though vague, was too serious, it came from too high a source, it responded to fears too much excited to permit it to be passed by without full examination; and on the other hand, as efforts of the same kind might be renewed, it became necessary to know now the origin, authors, secret lien and definite end. In the session of the 28th of July, Duport demanded to speak. He was a firm, bold mind, going straight to the bottom of things, sparing of blows without an object, but when he did strike, striking strongly. The assembly had, on motion of

* Le Courrier de Versailles à Paris, No. 21. p. 9.

† Some said to burn it. See Prud'homme, *Révolutions de Paris*, t. 1. No. 3. p. 39.

‡ *Moniteur*, session of the 27th of July.

Volney, already appointed a committee of thirty members, commissioned to receive and examine *memorials, complaints and requests*.^{*} Duport wanted more. After a sober and nervous description of the misfortunes of the country, he concluded that they should appoint a commission of four persons *to hear the report and the proofs upon the plot of Brest and other similar ones*. To make a superintendence favorable to the security of all, weigh upon the liberty of some; to restrain individual right in the name and for the advantage of the social right was the end; but they might have foreseen that it would be surpassed; there was but a step from a commission specially commissioned to discover plots to a special commission entrusted with their punishment. Thus were laid by the hand of a counsellor of the parliament and a magistrate, the first basis of the famous revolutionary tribunal. Opposed with less authority than vehemence by Virieu, by the elegant Chavalier de Boufflers, the proposition (remarkable circumstance,) had nobles for its principal supporters; the Viscount de Noailles, the Count de Castellane, the Duke de la Rochefoucauld. Rewbell having unveiled the image of a provisional tribunal; Gouy d'Arcy having spoken of establishing a secret commission, the assembly was becoming alarmed, when Le Chapelier brought back the suffrages of the majority to the ideas of Duport by presenting the plan under a skilfully softened form. D'André had moved that the number of the commissioners should be changed from four to twelve, which tended to enervate the institution; this amendment facilitated the adoption of the measure. The fear which Paris inspired did the rest. The commissioners chosen were Duport, the bishop of Chartres, the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, de Glaizen, Fréteau, Trouchet, Rewbell, d'André, Bouche, Pétion, Yvernault and the most furious adversary of the plan, the Count de Virieu.

The debates which have come down to us have not the lustre of certain great oratorical playthings; but they were of capital importance, as designating the two rival doctrines which were to divide the revolution as they had divided the eighteenth century.

The pupils of Voltaire and Montesquieu, maintained with Lally Tollendal, Mounier and Malouet, that the code of civilized nations is, above all else, a code of guarantees; that no consideration of public utility should prevail over the religion of individual right; that to give too much spring to the common action, is to forge arms for tyranny.

Robespierre and the disciples of Jean-Jacques thought, on the contrary, that men are bound by a solidarity, a mysterious chain whose first link is fastened to the throne of God; that it is the happiness of the whole human family which furnishes the principle, rule, measure and justification of rights; that beyond that there are bold usurpations or unjust pretensions; that the rights of individuals being only determinable in accordance with their reference to the advantage of all, to immolate to those rights, considered in an isolated state, what is due to the country in danger, is a deplorable folly when it is not a crime.

It was to maintain in the prospect of a combat, and it was then very

^{*} Moniteur, session of the 28th of July. Digitized by Google

necessary, a doctrine which is essentially that of peace; for progress consists in realizing more and more, in the bosom of human societies, the law of unity which is seen in the divine works, that admirable law which is revealed in the human body by the mutual dependence of the members, and in the shining mechanism of the universe by the attraction of worlds.

Whilst subjugated to the laws of events, which from certain heights, sports with the will of men, the national assembly was permitting itself to be led to almost sinister measures of precaution, Necker was returning from his exile with his soul open to thoughts of clemency. Having reached Bale on the 20th of July; he had taken apartments at the Hotel of the *Three Kings*. Having learned on the next day that the Duke and Dutchess de Polignac were at a neighboring hotel, he did not hesitate to visit them, and it was from them that he learned the recent news from Paris.* A few days after, Dufresne de Saint Leon brought him a letter from the king and the decree of the assembly. Necker then began to prove that fatigue of heart, which announces the night of ambition; the Dutchess de Polignac had drawn a frightful picture of the popular excitement; for a moment he hesitated. His reply to the king breathes a melancholy gravity. To the assembly he wrote,—“I ought, gentlemen, to offer you the homage of my respectful gratitude. My devotion is not necessary to you, but it is important to my happiness to prove to the king and the French nation, that nothing can relax a zeal which has been so long the interest of my life.”†

The return of Necker was a true triumph. The peasants hastened to meet him, sowing the road with flowers, and when he passed all cried out, waving their hats, “*Vive Necker, the Father of the People.*” The bourgeois militia preceded him; the bells of the villages through which he passed, rang out peals. At Chaumont, in Bassigny, he was received by the municipal officers, who waited for him full of impatience, and who offered him, in the German fashion, the hospitalities of the city.‡ The enthusiasm was so extraordinary, so illy regulated in its transports, that when he seated himself at table with his family, an inhabitant claimed the honor of waiting on him; an unworthy homage, which Madame de Staël rebuked with these words; “No, sir, you are a citizen.”§ Being about to retire to take some rest, the whole bourgeois militia wished to watch over his sleep, and Durville, the commander of the first corps of infantry, slept in his chamber.|| So much exaltation was there at the bottom of the ideas which Necker appeared then to represent.

Scarcely had the recalled minister reached Versailles, than he went to the chateau; he found it silent and deserted. Marie Antoinette, lately so haughty and so menacing, had the attitude, appearance and language of dejection. The strength of listlessness even was no longer left to

* Madame de Staël, *Considerations sur la Révolution Française*, t. 1. chap. 23. p. 243.

† Barrière says in the *Point de Jour*, that this letter was listened to with transports by the assembly.

‡ Relation de ce qui s'est passé à Chaumont en Bassigny, lors de l'arrivée de M. Necker, (published at the time,) p. 8.

§ Ibid.

|| Ibid.

Louis the Sixteenth. The post of governess of the children of France, left vacant by the departure of the Dutchess de Polignac, had been given to the Marchioness de Tourzel. The portfolio of foreign affairs had been restored to M. de Montmorin, and the Count de Saint Priest replaced M. de Villedeuil in the ministry of the king's household.* The appearance of the court was entirely changed.

On the 29th of July, Necker went to thank the assembly, where unexampled plaudits awaited his presence. To some words which he pronounced in a trembling voice, promises of devotion mingled with gratitude, the Duke de Liancourt replied in a speech which exhausted all the formularies of admiration.

We must read the journals of the times to obtain an idea of the popularity Necker enjoyed at this period. "The heart is wrung," said Gorsas,† "in thinking of all he has suffered, of all he must have suffered. His eyes are examined to divine the movements of his soul. He is a father returning among a family which cherishes him; and though he may have nothing more to fear, they are still anxious, they question him to learn if there is not some concealed wound which he is unwilling to show from fear of afflicting his children."

How could a man, surrounded with so much love and respect, be preserved from the vertigo of pride? Necker thought himself the hand when he was the instrument. To bestow an amnesty on defeat from the very origin of the strife; to decree a forgetfulness of resentments when injuries were increasing and dangers multiplying; to save the guilty at the risk of encouraging their accomplices; to save Besenval; to interdict its anger, which was its prudence, to the revolution, was what Necker dared to conceive. One thing should, however, have warned him of the rashness of his hopes. Passing through Villenau, he had written a letter to the authorities of the place from his carriage, which implored the liberty of Besenval; it had no effect. But the incense of Versailles intoxicated him. He did not understand that there was a formidable misunderstanding in all this noise they were making about his person; that what they were applauding in him was ideas which already surpassed many of his own. He was ignorant, besides, that glory is a snare held out to the activity of chosen hearts; that reputation is the livery with which the people dress the talents which are admitted into their service, and that popularity wishes as its slaves those whom it appears to choose as its idols.

Necker then took that road to the Hotel de Ville of Paris which was to witness the agonies of Louis the Sixteenth, and at the end of which were the pavements which de Launey, Bertier and Foullon had reddened with their blood. A whole army preceded, surrounded and followed the carriage of the minister. As numerous and more brilliant than that which had accompanied the king, the court of Necker consisted of the Marchioness Lafayette, the Princesses Lubomiska and Protoska, the Baronness de Stael, the Count de Saint Priest, Lafayette, Clermont-

* Notice sur M. le Comte de Saint Priest, par M. de Beraute, p. 107.

† Le Courrier de Versailles à Paris, No. 23. p. 48.

Tonnerre, Rochechouart, de Lusignan,* etc. Twelve electors received the expected guest at the Hotel de Ville, and conducted him to his sofa in the midst of applause; and then Moreau de Saint Rémy, advancing to him, presented the cockade of the revolution to him: "These colors are dear to you; they are those of liberty." After having been addressed by M. de la Vigne in the name of the commune, Necker, in a noble and touching speech, asked for the pardon of Besenval. Whilst he was speaking, his countenance became altered, his eyes moistened. Moreover, he entreated. This sadness in triumph, this humility in glory, made a profound impression. "Yes," was exclaimed from all sides, "grace, pardon, amnesty." The excitement was so great, that a general amnesty, proposed by Clermont Tonnerre, was immediately consented to. Necker returned to Versailles; his countenance radiant, his heart full of joy.

There, however, was to be the rock, there the termination of his popularity. The decree of the electors confirming the amnesty was no sooner known than every thing was on fire. Who had, given the electors the right of annulling the decrees of the national assembly, of pardoning the declared enemies of the people, of disposing of the revenge or the generosity of Paris? Was not this Baron de Besenval, about whom such extreme solicitude was shown, the same person who was to preside over the murder of the Parisians, the same who wrote to the governor of the Bastille, "Hold out?" Had they not for obscure crimes, those of misery or famine, that indulgence with which they covered those born from the delirium of ambition and the intoxication of pride? They hoped in vain; the revolution would not permit itself to be disarmed; if it pleased it to be generous, it would be after, not before the combat. The railing was universal. The district of the Oratoire sent two of its members to Villenau to prevent Besenval from being set at liberty. The district of the Blancs-Manteaux made the national assembly resound with its complaints and its threats. The electors alarmed, then re-considered their previous decree; they explained that they had only intended to proscribe acts of violence, extra legal punishments. The national assembly on its side declared that it approved of the explanation furnished by the electors, and that Besenval should be kept under the guardianship of the law.

One day had been enough to precipitate Necker from the top of his pedestal. On learning the retraction of the electors, he grew pale, and wrote, "My happiness has lasted but a short time."

It was at this time that the bloody and mysterious adventure of Pinet took place, which it is important for us to relate, because it is strictly connected with the causes which retained the people in the path of rigor.

Pinet, broker and secretary to the king, was a man generally esteemed.† He had gentle manners, a benevolent soul, and discharged his engagements with an almost religious exactness. His fortune, originally very limited, had increased prodigiously in a short time. How? No one knew. All that was known was, that he was not a gambler, that he did not try the chances of the lottery, that he was not addicted to usurious

* *L'Ami du Roi*, Cahier 5. chap. 68. p. 43.

† *Prud'homme*, *Révolutions de Paris*, t. 1. No. 3. p. 41.

negotiations, and paid an enormous interest for the funds which the universal confidence he had inspired placed in his keeping.* His relations with many of the principal persons of the court were intimate; it added to his credit, that he appeared to make use of the nobility, preferring to admit poor persons to his good offices, as if to sanctify his happiness by goodness. After the death of Foullon and Bertier, he fell suddenly into deep sadness.† A letter having been brought him on the 29th of July, he read it three times, dined with a very calm air with his family, and even invited some friends to supper; but between six and seven o'clock in the evening he went out under some idle pretext, and did not re-appear. On the next day, at the entrance of the wood of Vesinet, near Saint Germain, a man was met, covered with blood; it was Pinet. Carried to the inn of Pecq and interrogated, he replied, that he knew nothing of his frightful adventure; that called out in the evening to the Champs Elysées for a financial operation, he had awoken in the wood of Vesinet, with his head lying on a trunk of a tree which was red with blood; that he did not know how he had been wounded, nor how he had been found in a place so remote from his road. A surgeon was sent for in haste; he said to Pinet, "It is not a trunk of a tree which has caused this wound; it is fire-arms."‡ At these words Pinet was troubled, placed his finger on his lips, and made a sign that it was impossible for him to speak before witnesses. He ended, however, by declaring that he had been assassinated, and that his affairs were in a good condition; that nothing would be lost if they understood him; that he was very desirous to be taken to Paris, . . . and he recommended particularly care of his red portfolio. Three days afterwards he was dead.

A statement of the declarations of the dying man should have been drawn up; none such was ever produced; the red portfolio was never brought forward, notwithstanding the indications which Pinet had certainly furnished; and finally as a last singularity, the conductors of the *Chronicle* published the exact amount of the failure, two months before it should have been verified.§ It amounted to no less than fifty-four millions. It was a gulph in which fifteen hundred families were swallowed up.

A discharged pistol which was picked up in the wood of Vesinet, and another loaded, which was found in the pocket of Pinet, at first caused a belief in suicide. But it was soon known that the unfortunate broker had been submitted, for days preceding his death, to a steady system of intimidation. Strange suspicions arose. There could be alleged as proofs of assassination, the disappearance of the portfolio, the testimony of the dying man, the anterior threats of which he had been the object, many circumstances of a nature to prove that his situation had been prosperous to the very last. The hypothesis of the assassination, on

* *L'Ami du Roi*, etc., Cahier 5. chap. 70. p. 59.

† *Hist. de la Révolution par deux amis de la liberté*, t. 3. chap. 3. p. 92. Edition of 1792—all that the *Moniteur* contains either about the compact of famine or the adventure of Pinet, is an exact copy of the recital of the *deux amis de la liberté*, which itself has need of being rectified and completed.

‡ *L'Ami du Roi*, Cahier 5. chap. 70. p. 70.

§ *L'Ami du Roi*, etc., cahier 5, chap. 70. p. 71.

being examined nearer, led to important remarks. It was remembered that Pinet had always enveloped his operations with an impenetrable veil; that when any one whose funds were confided to him had questioned him about their investment, he was accustomed to return the sum at once. The list of his friends, passed in review, was free from suspected names. He paid a monstrous interest for the money which was placed with him, from seventy-five to one hundred per cent.;* what was then the kind of operation which was capable of supporting such a price in a time of trouble and suspicion, in a time in which manufacturing was dead, commerce was flying before war, and the fields were uncultivated? It was believed the enigma was explained; Pinet must have been the banker of the monopoly in grain. His benevolence served to assure him against the reproaches of his heart. We have seen the national assembly establish a committee of subsistence. Though this committee was working in the dark, no one doubted, that it was actively engaged in ferreting out the monopolists. Public opinion stopped then here; Pinet had been pressed to denounce the odious continuers of that system of monopolizing, which, under the name of the *Compact of Famine*, had dishonored the reign of Louis the Fifteenth;† the guilty had feared a revelation which would have ensured their instant massacre, and after having attempted to prevent it by threats, they had stifled it by assassination.

Nothing more was ever known. Loustalot wrote in his journal in announcing the death of Pinet; "This event should throw much light on the present revolution."‡ But the number of the guilty, their rank, their credit, and their wealth prevented the truth from appearing.

A redoubling of distrust and anger arose among the people from this, the enormity of the crime being increased in their eyes by the scandal of the impunity. There were formidable demonstrations at Paris. The complaints of the families which had been ruined, mingled with the clamors of the crowd, who, feeling themselves to be struck by invisible hands, were enraged at not being able to escape from the disasters of the monopoly, not to reach the monopolists. The high price of bread produced violent emeutes around Paris, whose echo the Palais Royal prolonged. Chatel, the mayor of Saint Denis, was murdered§ in a moment of drunken and furious blindness.

That moral electricity, which at given hours communicates the same shock to all minds, is at once the danger and the strength of France. Such as was the capital, was the kingdom. The provinces had their tragedies, no less sombre than those of Paris. Like Bertier at Paris, Major Belsunce, at Caen, expiated his disdain by a terrible death. Abhorred by the people because he pursued the revolution with outrageous defiance; because on horseback, armed to the teeth and accompanied by a man of sinister appearance, he affected to smile with contempt at the fêtes for

* Hist. de la Revolution par deux amis, etc., t. 3. chap. 3. p. 91. Edition 1792.

† The details of this abominable speculation are found styled, "The Prisoner of State, or an Historical Picture of the Captivity of J. G. G., Provost of Beaumont." It is from this letter that all the authors who have spoken of the Compact of Famine have drawn.

‡ *Revolutions de Paris*, t. 1. No. 3. 42.

§ *Le Cousin Jacques*, p. 141, et suiv.

the recall of Necker; because he was accused of having taken insultingly from three grenadiers of the regiment d'Artois, a medal decreed to their civism; because he was suspected of urging on the regiment of Bourbon, of which he was the major, to some sacrilegious blow,* he was attacked in his quarters, given up, dragged to the Hotel de Ville and shot during the passage. His body was immediately torn to pieces, and the vengeance of offended love finding a place for itself through the public anger, a woman tore out his heart.†

Thus there was fierce anxiety every where; every where a pitiless hatred toward the enemies of the new spirit, but also every where, courage, ardor, powerful hope, the quiverings of life at the first rays of day, and a people erect, with their faces turned towards Paris, the City of the Sun.

Behold in what terms a German, who arrived in France during the latter part of July, described the emotion which the sight of our country caused at that period. "I shall never get rid of the impressions which seized me, when I first saw the French cockade in the hats and caps of those whom we met, bourgeois and peasants, children and old men, priests and mendicants, and could read on their joyous faces a kind of fierceness in the presence of men belonging to other countries. I wanted to clasp in my arms the first I met. There were no longer any but Frenchmen; my companions and myself had ceased an instant to be Brandenburgers, inhabitants of Brunswick; national schisms and interests disappeared: "I am a man," said each of us, "and nothing which concerns humanity is foreign to me."‡

It was a beautiful spectacle, more beautiful than all those of the heroic times. That three colored cockade§ for which Lafayette predicted so many immortal conquests, and which glittered borne by the laborer, artisan, gentleman, priest, soldier and vagabond, it gave as an emblem of equality until it should give it an empire. This was also admirable, that many humble pastors of parishes were then raised suddenly to the intelligence of the gospel, the code of an enfranchised world; for it was not only in Paris, that priests like the Abbé Fauchet, called upon the crucified to testify to the holiness of the new desires; it was not only at Paris that at the sight of processions of young girls in white going to pray to the patroness of the Place for the safety of the people, they exclaimed . . . "O, blessed one, how many different vows have you hearkened to. Saint Louis asked for the conquest of Jerusalem from you, Louis the Eleventh for pardon of his crimes, Charles the Ninth the Saint Bartholomew, Louis the Fourteenth his victims, and our virgins ask for liberty."|| The revolution was carried with prodigious suddenness from city to village, from village to farm houses, leaving every where

* See Prud'homme, *Revolutions de Paris*, t. 1. No. 7. p. 45. *Mémoires de Dumouriez*, t. 2. liv. 3. chap. 3. p. 53 et 54.

† "It was maintained that she ate it," says Dumouriez, t. 2. p. 55.

‡ Letters written from France at the period of the revolution, by J. K. Campe, (in German,) the first letter, p. 11.

§ To red and blue, which were the colors of Paris, were joined white, in honor of the king, according to Anonville; to represent the people, according to Campe.

|| *Révolutions de Paris*, t. 1. No. 6. p. 26.

a long train of enthusiasm behind it. Yes, it was the revolutionary enthusiasm which before and better than laws, changed the geographical chart of our country of France. From the same burst towards the reign of right, sprung the unity of territory. Liberty made the country.

CHAPTER XV.

THE DESTRUCTION OF FEUDALISM.

The rising in the country—The Incendiaries of Dauphiny—The tragedy of Vesoul—Panic through all France—Scenes of Vengeance—The peasants burn the châteaux and charter houses—Burgherism and the peasants—Secret cabals at Paris—Night of the 4th of August, 1789—Destruction of feudalism in France—End of the first act of the Bourgeois Revolution.

TOWARDS the end of the month of July, three peasants hastened to announce to the inhabitants of the small city of Montluel, that at a league and a half distant they had encountered fifty armed men in a corner of the wood, around fires lighted for a heavy meal. "The brigands!" was the cry which was then resounding from one end of France to the other; terror seized the inhabitants of Montluel. The receiver of the gabelle, André, hastened to hide the treasures of the king, and a telescope directed towards the spot where these unknown men had been seen, showed them untwisting a thick rope, melting rosin, in which they were dipping the strands, and forming a kind of torches with clubs.* A horseman who appeared to be the leader of the band, having arrived, they entered the forest with precipitation. At nightfall, the suspicious strangers made a demonstration against the city; but finding the gates closed, they pushed on to a chateau situated in the neighborhood. The porter alone dwelt in it; they made him retire with his effects and his family. They then broke the doors, sought for the titles and papers, assembled them and set fire to the chateau. Torch in hand they continued their march. In passing the villages where the tocsin of alarm announced their approach, they exclaimed, "Be not afraid, good people. We are only after your enemies. We have sworn war on the tyrants of the people." They burned twelve châteaux in succession, the largest of which was that of the Baron d'Anton. They respected moreover the residences of the poor, maltreated no one, and "had really the appearance of avenging the oppressed people."† The chateau of Mezin was saved, because they found a sick woman in bed in it. They contented themselves with seizing the signorial titles which they burned in the court yard.

A pamphlet of the period, published under the title of *the Incendiaries of Dauphiny, or the enemies of the great*, points out, that the acts which took place were in no way the fruit of seditious teachings, and adds,

* *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de l'année, 1789*, t. 1. p. 193. by Google. † *Ibid.* p. 196.

"The great, the rich, the provincial lords, had so long cruelly crushed the people, that there was an old, almost ineffaceable hatred to them. They had taken their subsistence from the people to melt it into money, to carry it in dues to the tyrannical lords; now it was *corvées*, now unjust proceedings, now violence. Vengeance was amassed during an age in ulcerated hearts, and as soon as they could act, it was a torrent which no longer knew a restraint."

The movement which urged the country people to the destruction of the feudal fortresses, had besides received the most violent impulse from an unforeseen catastrophe. In the neighborhood of Vesoul rose a chateau, whose owner was remarked for an ardent, envenomed opposition to all the new ideas. A counsellor of the parliament, M. de Mesmay was among those nobles whom the third estate called protestants; because they had protested against the double representation. Not thinking himself in safety, he had absented himself towards the latter part of July, after having recommended his people to open the chateau to a popular fête. On the 19th of July, Sunday, the peasants of the neighborhood had assembled in a grove contiguous to the chateau, and were abandoning themselves to joy, when suddenly between eleven o'clock and midnight, an alarming explosion was heard, and at the same time the earth was strewn with killed or wounded. A barrel of powder had taken fire. The peasants immediately dispersed with curses on their lips, the cry of *treason* resounded from village to village, mixed with the tolling of the tocsin; a statement was drawn up, and horsemen started for Versailles at full speed. The theatre of a patriotic festival inundated with blood, torches lighted round the chateau by vengeful hands, the bailiwick of Vesoul a prey to frighful agitations, such was the statement which M. Prunelle, a deputy from Franche Comté, read to the assembly. There was a start of horror on all the benches, and it was agreed that the president should go to the king, to beseech him to order an inquiry as to the authors and accomplices in this crime. It was to sanction the suspicions of the people at a time when they were soon to be changed to fury.

The innocence of M. de Mesmay was afterwards recognized,* but the blow was struck. The news of the tragedy of Vesoul, rapidly propagated, made all France start. In several places it was represented as the proof of a vast plot, as a signal for a Saint Bartholomew of the peasants; and certain lords had rendered themselves so odious, that no attempt on their part appeared to be improbable.

Add to this the universal fermentation produced by the fear of that fantastic army of brigands, who it was said, were in the pay of the aristocrats, and employed to destroy the harvests. This was the great fear of the year. Groups of women frequently came to the villages in tears, crying out "The brigands;" that was enough.† They hastened to the bell, the tocsin rung out for aid, the men armed themselves and flew to meet an enemy always invisible, but always expected. The roads were covered, now with armed bands which were going singing to the conquest of manor houses, now with alarmed cultivators, who driving their

* Session of the 5th of June, 1791.

† Prad'homme, *Révolutions de Paris*, No. 3, p. 12.

beasts before them, were hastening to the cities. Then there were wandering troops of famished wretches, whom despair sent forth in pursuit of the monopolists, or of couriers whom the gentlemen were despatching to each other, to exhort one another mutually to vigilance. Never was there a more vast, more heroical disorder; for the enthusiasm of liberty was hovering above imaginary alarms, inspirations of hatred, misery, famine.

The peasants of the Maconnais descended from their mountains; they inundated Burgundy. In Upper Alsace many chateaux were reduced to ashes, and several bailiffs had to fly. In Franche Comté, bands of peasants invested the Abbays of Clairfontaine, de Lure, de Bithaine, devastated the chateau de Molans, and destroyed from top to bottom, that of Vaux villiers, which belonged to the Dutchess of Clermont Tonnerre. This lady had fled at the approach of the assailants, and had taken refuge in a granary where she remained concealed behind some fagots, until the arrival of a company of Chasseurs, whom the Princess de Broglie had sent to her, and who placed her in safety.* The wrath of the rural population did not seek to display itself against persons: it generally attacked only those insolent stones which hardened the remembrance of servitude and titles, which by heirship perpetuated the feudal tyranny.

There were, however, some scenes, through which the fury of civil discords shone. The Marquis d'Ormenan, a paralytic old man, was driven from his manor during the night, and constrained to fly assisted by his two daughters. The Baron de Montjustin suspended in a well, was about to be thrown down it, when some soldiers passing by saved him. In Normandy, the man of business of an absent lord refused to give up the title papers of his master; they burned the soles of his feet to constrain him.† In Languedoc, the Marquis de Barras was massacred in the presence of his wife, who was with child.

But admirable traits of devotion, acts of touching solicitude answered for these transports of cruelty, which were besides very rare. In many places the country-people did more than spare, they protected those of their lords, who had given proofs of justice and humanity towards them. The Marquis de Montfermeil, for example, having been accused of monopolizing, the inhabitants of his village went in a body to the Hotel de Ville of Paris, to declare that this gentleman had been on the contrary the benefactor of the country.‡

In this general effervescence of minds, the part of burgherism was remarkably undecisive. Placed between feudalism, which it was impatient to destroy, and the people whom it dreaded, it employed its soldiery by turns in serving the movement, and in combatting it. Informed that the chateau of Comartin was to be fired, the bourgeois of Tournu hastened thither, attacked the peasants, killed some, and led others off as prisoners. A council of war was immediately called, and the leaders were hung by the party mounting guard.§ The volunteers of Châlons-sur-Saône also

* L'Ami du Roi, cahier 5. chap. 72. p. 94.

† Hist. de la conspiration de Louis Philippe, Joseph d'Orleans, p. 107. Paris, 1796.

‡ Ibid. Droz, histoire du regne de Louis 16, t. 2. p. 378.

§ L'Ami du Roi, cahier 5. chap. 72. p. 90.

made several sorties into the country, at the end of which bloody executions took place, which the provost ordered. But it was at Lyons, especially, that the bourgeois separated their cause openly from that of the people. There were seen on the very dawn of the revolution, young men, minors, bankers, merchants' clerks, clerks of the palace, organize themselves into a body of volunteers, adopt a special uniform, appoint their officers, with the pretension of restraining by violence the popular agitations. The first *echevin* called these young men his *guard of honor*, and the people gave them the name of the *muscadins*.* The news having reached Lyons that the chateaux of Messieurs de Loras, de Leuze, de Combe, de Saint-Priest and de Pusignat, were demolished or in flames, and that the convent of Salette was menaced, volunteers and dragoons went into the country under the command of a captain of the militia. The peasants, attacked briskly were dispersed, leaving eighty-four dead; and the prisoners, sixty in number, were taken to Lyons with their hands tied. At this sight, the faubourg de la Guillotiere was moved; workmen gain the tops of the houses and cover the roofs; stones are thrown. The volunteers replied with musket shots, which killed two of the insurgents; the dragoons, called in all haste, made a general discharge; finally, the consuls and syndics of the city intimidated the revolt by declaring that if the roofs were not cleared, *fire and blood would be carried through the suburbs*.† Thus, before the common enemy had been crushed, burgherism turned against its auxiliaries. There were many who only perceived in the storm a power of destruction; they forgot that seeds travel on the wings of the tempests, and that the impetuous winds have received power to spread secunity.

The nobles were, however, deeply troubled by the noise of their crumbling towers and the light of the flames which consumed their charter rooms. The time had come to take leave of the old things, they must resolve upon it. In the session of the 27th of July, Mounier had read the two first chapters of the constitution, and in the session of the 1st of August the question had been agitated whether they should place *a declaration of rights* at the head of this constitution; but whilst the affirmative was maintained by Montmorency, Mounier, Target, Castellane, Lally Tollendal, Mirabeau, and the contrary by Crenière, Grandin, Malouet, the Duke de Levi, and the Bishop of Langres, whilst Barnave was pronouncing the decisive word, *National Catechism*,‡ alarming reports and recitals full of sinister images reached Versailles from every point in France. All these debates in the assembly were evidently marching less quickly than the passions of the people. Secret cabals§ were then held among the gentlemen whom the philosophy of the eighteenth century had half engaged in its service, in which the fiery Viscount de Noailles, the Duke d'Aiguillon, ardent to conceal his father from the eyes of posterity, the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, Alexandre de

* Balleydier, *Hist. du peuple de Lyon pendant la Révolution Française*, chap. 1, p. 7.

† *Ibid.*, p. 8 et 9.

‡ Le Courier de Provence, pour servir de suite aux lettres du Comte de Mirabeau à ses Commettants, t. 2. No. 22. p. 18.

§ Mémoires de Barrère, p. 31.

Lameth, those whom the bitter distrust of Rivarol calls the *demagogues of the democracy*,* ruled. "Why should we hesitate," they said, "it is destiny which pronounces. To save the feudal regime? Alas! it only remains for us to do the more honor to its agony," and they determined that they themselves should be the first to propose the abolition of the feudal rights. To conduct the funeral rites of the past, was now the point of honor with the nobility.

It has been written that this decision was not voluntary; that fear had advised it, necessity imposed it. . . . We do not, however, hold human nature in such light esteem as to be only pleased with assigning a disgraceful origin to the shining facts of history. We should blush to be compelled to acknowledge that justice is always inevitably inferior in power to egotism or to fear. No, no, it did not spring from that, and it is the glory of the revolution that it kindled hostile hearts with its flame, that it saw those whom it struck kneel before it in respect and admiration.

It was on Tuesday, at eight o'clock in the evening, at Versailles, that one of the most memorable sessions of which the history of assemblies has preserved a remembrance, was opened. Le Chapelier presided. He had been chosen, the evening before, in place of Thouret, towards whom the choice of the assembly had first been directed, but whom imperious rumors, sprung from the Palais Royal, constrained to a humiliating resignation. Some faces bore the traces of unusual occupation; they were speaking in low voices on the benches of the nobles; several sought for Mirabeau, and were astonished at his absence.†

Target rose. He had been commissioned to read a plan of a proclamation which demanded respect for persons and property.

Scarcely had he finished, when the Viscount de Noailles asked impetuously for permission to speak. Do they wish to protect persons, guarantee property, found the reign of law, extinguish the fires kindled in the four corners of France? Well, then, let there be a truce to vain exhortations. Safety . . . is justice, that is,

Equality in taxation;

The destruction of the privileges which crush the people;

The abolition of the feudal rights, on the payment of a redemption;

The abolition, without redemption, of seigniorial *corvées*, mortmains and all personal servitude.‡

A movement of surprise was exhibited among the members of the Breton club; for this initiative on which the Viscount de Noailles seized, they had confided on the evening before to the Duke de Aiguillon, one of their members. The duke could only sustain, then, the motion of his colleague, which he did with force and emotion, as was suitable in a suicide. The agitations of this fruitful night then began. In asking that they should purchase, instead of abolishing those personal servitudes which were not a right, which were a crime, the Duke d'Aiguillon recoiled before a limit intrepidly crossed by the Viscount de

* *Mémoires de Rivarol*, p. 139.

† *Mémoires de Mirabeau*. "We will dwell little on the nocturnal session of the 4th of August, at which he could not and did not wish to assist," t. 6, p. 166.

‡ See the *Moniteur*, night session of the 4th of August.

Noailles. But a younger brother, the latter was poor, whilst the former, as a rich lord, was only surpassed by the king.*

Thus the sensation was profound. A learned dissertation, by Le-grand, on the different kinds of feudal rights, was scarcely listened to. Science had spoken long enough to men; speech was to enthusiasm, the enthusiasm of truth.

A farmer appeared in the tribune. His gesture was rude and his figure austere. He wore the dress of a peasant, was called Le Guen de Kerengal, and had never spoken. All listened to him. He did not go there to make a speech, but to perform an act; "What matter to us those titles which outrage shame, which insult humanity, which force men to harness themselves to a cart like laboring animals. What matter to us those titles, by virtue of which men pass their nights in beating ponds to prevent the frogs from disturbing the sleep of a voluptuous lord."† "Yes, yes," cried the quivering tribunes.

A deputy from Franche-Comté succeeded him, and he showed the assembly all that the archives of the feudal regime furnished of bloody memorials.‡

Writers who were witnesses of it have in vain attempted to paint faithfully the holy, indomitable intoxication, whose mysterious empire this night of the 4th of August, 1789, indicated. It was a fever of generosity, a delirium of self-denial, with which the annals of no other people have any thing comparable. The Marquis de Foucault, having complained of the abuses of the pensions of the court, the Dukes de Guiche and de Moxtemart hastened to declare, that the high nobility were proud to renounce, for the common good, the favors of the king. The Duke de Chatelet proposed to convert the tenths into money rents; the Viscount de Beauharnais, to proclaim all citizens admissible to public posts; the Count de Custine, to place the price of redemption of the feudal rights at a lower rate than the price indicated by the Duke d'Aiguillon; the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, to free the blacks of the colonies; M. de Cotin, to suppress the seignorial courts; M. de Richer, to abolish the venality of offices.

The emotion continued to increase. An impatience which resembled heroism, mingled wishes by drawing souls together. The number of generous offers was so great, the concourse of expiatory motions so vehement, that the secretaries could not write down the too rapid enumeration of them. A counsellor of parliament demanded the destruction of the privileges of the magistracy. Barrère gave the profits of his post to his fellow citizens.§ Those who had no personal sacrifice to make, spoke to express their grief therefor. "I am like Catullus," said the Count de Virieu, "I have but a sparrow; I offer it." "There is more than one

* Alexandre Lameth, *Histoire de l'Assemblée Constituante*, t. 1. p. 86, 96 and 97. 1828.

† *Le Point de Jour*, t. 2. p. 80. No. 42.

‡ *Le Point de Jour* in its 44th No. indicates, without reporting it, the speech of this deputy, whom it calls *Le*. In his *Courrier de Provence*, t. 2. No. 23. p. 13, Mirabeau gives only an analysis of the speech. The *Moniteur*, in which the session of the 4th of August is very inadequately and badly reported, does not say a word about it.

§ *Memoires de Barrère*, p. 223.

Lesbia here, ready to accept it,"* replied somebody. There was grace in the enthusiasm. Prolonged applauses were heard; the suppression of dove-cots through the whole kingdom was voted by acclamation. "And we also," said the Curate Thibault,† "wish to come to the assistance of the kingdom; we will surrender our *surplice fees*." There was general tenderness at those words. "No, no," replied a crowd of voices, "the country is grateful for the offering of the poor, but does not accept it." On motion of Duport, it was determined that the endowments of the rural priests should be increased. There were no longer plaudits, there were tears.

The president having invited the clergy to declare themselves, the Bishop of Nancy said, that the redemption of the ecclesiastical feudalities met with his entire approval, provided the money should be laid out in foundations for the poor. The Bishop of Chartres, in his turn, described the distress of the rural populations in lively terms; he showed the farmer forced to behold in silence his fields ravaged by the dogs of a neighboring lord; he demanded the abolition of the exclusive right of hunting. A powerful and impassioned shout of adhesion arose immediately from the benches of the nobility. The assembly rises in an invincible transport. The paleness of great inspirations covered all faces; a kind of divine fire gushed from all countenances; they mutually encouraged one another to be happy from justice, strong from love; an invisible hand appeared to have, at least for a moment, torn aside the veil which hides the sight of luminous horizons from imperfect societies. The session was a sacred festival, the tribune, an altar, the hall of deliberation, a temple. Such remembrances overwhelm us, weak generation that we are; for what know we now which equal your majesty, ye imposing scenes which were the glory of our fathers.

The barriers which cut up the kingdom definitely beaten down, the countries where provincial sessions were held suppressed, the particular privileges of cities annihilated, the honor of belonging unreservedly to the French family unanimously preferred to the pride of local sovereignties, to the charm of habit, to the respect for local traditions, to the devotion of souvenirs, was what crowned this great work. The representatives of Dauphiny opened the way, those of the other provinces entered upon it, taking each other's hands. Provençals, Burgundians, Lorrainers, Normans, Languedocians, Auvergnats, Franch-Comptois, Alsatians, even Bretons, all these people disappeared. One people alone remained; it was France.

The Duke de Liancourt then proposed that a medal should be struck in commemoration of such fruitful hours. Lally Tollendal reminded them of the king; all hearts had already mounted towards God.

The following was the conquest over prejudices, falsehood, tyranny, and death.

The abolition of the quality of serf and mortmain, under any name whatsoever;

The power of redeeming the seigniorial rights;

* *Courrier de Provence*, t. 2. No. 23. p. 18 et 19.

The abolition of seignorial jurisdictions;

The suppression of the exclusive rights of hunting, dove-cots, and warrens;

A tax in money in place of tithes; the possible redemption of all tithes of all kinds;

The abolition of all pecuniary privileges and immunities;

Equality of taxation;

The admission of all citizens to civil and military employments;

A declaration of the approaching establishment of gratuitous justice, and of the abolition of the sale of offices;

The abandonment of particular privileges of provinces and cities;

The suppression of the right of first fruits, annates, and the plurality of benefices;

The destruction of pensions obtained without merit;

The reformation of the jurandes.*

It was decided that a medal should be struck; that a solemn *Te Deum* should be chanted; and that the National Assembly should go as a deputation to the king, to carry to him the title of *Restorer of French Liberty*, with a request that he would be present at the *Te Deum*.

They separated; it was two hours after midnight.

When the day appeared, when the deputies awoke, they thought they had come out of a ravishing dream. They found themselves in the midst of an entirely new society.

Perhaps some then thought that the work of redemption was achieved. How would they have been surprised, if they had been told that they were at but the first act of the drama. And with how much more painful astonishment would their souls have been seized, had they been permitted to foresee those superhuman transports, unbridled struggles, prodigies of will and of devotion, a whole generation pushed on to the scaffold and led from the scaffold to war, reason arming itself from folly, genius in a fury, the world on fire, were not sufficient to dethrone the evil; that one day, in France, thousands of men would fight for bread; that industry would have its bloody circus, its fierce gladiators; that the lepers of the moral world, the livid heroes of mendicity, and all the unfortunate for whom the excess of misery is in place of vice, would huddle together in Paris in the midst of a frightful pell-mell; that there, in the infected quarters, in the streets which were full of mysteries, a night's rest would be sold to them for two sous; that at certain times they would walk through these between the kindled furnaces of the receivers of stolen goods and the daggers of nocturnal rovers; that above the crowd of irritated laborers, anxiety would dwell among the happy and gnaw their hearts; that they would be reduced to listen incessantly to the silence of plots, and the phantom of civil wars would be in all their feasts; that, in a word, there would be two societies, that of hunger and that of fear.

What is tyranny? We have told elsewhere, and must be permitted to repeat here, that is tyranny which is composed of ignorance, recklessness, bad examples, griefs of the soul which find no consoler, lawful desires

* *Moniteur*, night session of the 4th of August.